



PZ3

No. L. 792 Sc



Boston Public Library

Do not write in this book or mark it with pen or pencil. Penalties for so doing are imposed by the Revised Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

*This book was issued to the borrower on the date last stamped below.*

|             |            |  |
|-------------|------------|--|
|             | STACK FOUR |  |
| JUL 25 1951 |            |  |
| 721383      |            |  |
| DUE         |            |  |
| APR 10 1951 |            |  |
|             |            |  |
|             |            |  |
|             |            |  |
|             |            |  |
|             |            |  |
|             |            |  |
|             |            |  |
|             |            |  |
|             |            |  |
|             |            |  |
|             |            |  |



THE SCARLET MACAW

Stories by  
G. E. LOCKE



THE RED CAVALIER \$1.90

THE SCARLET MACAW 1.90



L. C. PAGE & COMPANY  
(INCORPORATED)

53 BEACON ST., BOSTON, MASS.





"A MOMENT MORE AND HER DAGGER WOULD HAVE BEEN BURIED IN THE DETECTIVE'S BACK" (See page 134)



*The*  
S C A R L E T  
• M A C A W •

BY  
G. E. LOCKE

AUTHOR OF  
"THE RED CAVALIER," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY  
CHARLES E. MEISTER



L. C. PAGE & COMPANY (INC.)  
BOSTON • MDCCCXIII

CENTRAL

PZ 3  
L 792 Sc

Copyright, 1923, by  
L. C. PAGE & COMPANY,  
(INCORPORATED)

*All rights reserved*

Entered at Stationers' Hall, London

Made in U. S. A.

*Reprint*  
First Impression, July, 1923

50-348

Feb. 3-1922

PRINTED BY C. H. SIMONDS COMPANY  
BOSTON, MASS., U. S. A.

WORLD BOOK COMPANY

# CONTENTS

| CHAPTER   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| I. THE LOCKED STUDY . . . . .                               | I    |
| II. BEHIND THE CURTAINS OF THE ALCOVE                       | 9    |
| III. THE MISSING PLAY . . . . .                             | 15   |
| IV. CLUES LEADING AND MISLEADING . .                        | 27   |
| V. ANOTHER FACTOR IN THE CASE . . .                         | 40   |
| VI. A TELEPHONE IN THE NIGHT . . . .                        | 51   |
| VII. "ONE OF US FOUR" . . . . .                             | 65   |
| VIII. THE FOLLIES' THEATRE . . . . .                        | 76   |
| IX. MR. HILDRETH REVELSTOKE . . . .                         | 89   |
| X. MR. REVELSTOKE'S SECRETARY . . . .                       | 100  |
| XI. WHITE CHRYSANTHEMUMS . . . . .                          | 109  |
| XII. THE LAPIDARY SHOP IN RAGGED FRIARS'<br>ALLEY . . . . . | 122  |
| XIII. "STICKING THE TIGER" . . . . .                        | 132  |
| XIV. THE UNKNOWN BENEFICIARY . . . .                        | 141  |
| XV. ELFINELLA . . . . .                                     | 151  |
| XVI. A BUTTERFLY IN THE NET . . . . .                       | 159  |
| XVII. THE MISSING WITNESS . . . . .                         | 168  |
| XVIII. MORE MYSTERY . . . . .                               | 176  |
| XIX. ANGELA DELLAROTTI . . . . .                            | 183  |

# CONTENTS

---

| CHAPTER |                                       | PAGE |
|---------|---------------------------------------|------|
| XX.     | REVELATIONS . . . . .                 | 201  |
| XXI.    | THE TESTIMONY OF MONSIEUR BARTOT      | 211  |
| XXII.   | THE SECOND HELEN . . . . .            | 222  |
| XXIII.  | CROSS FIRE . . . . .                  | 230  |
| XXIV.   | THE JURY'S VERDICT . . . . .          | 240  |
| XXV.    | THE CLUE OF THE TIGER'S EYE . . . . . | 251  |
| XXVI.   | THE LABEL IN CIPHER . . . . .         | 263  |
| XXVII.  | THE PURPLE SLEEP . . . . .            | 279  |
| XXVIII. | A QUESTION OF IDENTITY . . . . .      | 289  |
| XXIX.   | GATHERED THREADS . . . . .            | 298  |
| XXX.    | BON VOYAGE . . . . .                  | 312  |

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

---

|   | PAGE                |
|---|---------------------|
| “A MOMENT MORE AND HER DAGGER WOULD<br>HAVE BEEN BURIED IN THE DETECTIVE’S<br>BACK” ( <i>see page 134</i> ) . . . . . | <i>Frontispiece</i> |
| “THE TWO MEN WERE STRUGGLING WITH<br>SOMETHING THAT GASPED AND FOUGHT<br>TO FREE ITSELF” . . . . .                    | 15                  |
| “INDERWICK STAGGERED BACK, DAZED” . . . . .   | 120                 |
| “‘I COULD NOT BUT OVERHEAR SOME OF THE<br>CONVERSATION’” . . . . .  | <del>217</del> 40   |
| “‘I AM COMING TO YOU SOON, ANGELA’” . . . . .   | 288                 |



# THE SCARLET MACAW

## CHAPTER I

### THE LOCKED STUDY

MR. HAROLD PERCIVAL Inderwick felt that, could his parents, now deceased, have foreseen the maelstrom of tragic events into which a certain telephone call plunged their son, they would have bestowed upon him names of a more substantial ring than the "Lord Fauntleroy" ones of Harold Percival, for how could a man, thus denominated, expect to inspire confidence under the shadow of happenings so terrible that they all but destroyed his belief in his fellow-humans, and even threatened to engulf the being who was dearest to him on earth? Yet, to inspire confidence, in spite of the Harold Percival, is just what young Inderwick did do—as he always had done from the days when his schoolmates used to "rag" him on the fanciful combination of his Christian names.

Inderwick's connection with the tragedy of Pomander Lodge began, as before mentioned, with a telephone call sent one afternoon in June to the banking house of Palford Brothers & Palford. When the junior member took up the receiver in his

casual fashion, a girl's horror-choked voice asked for "Mr. Inderwick—and, Oh, hurry, please!"

As Inderwick, with an interrogative "Are you there?" placed the receiver to his ear, he recognized the voice that came quivering over the wire in response as that of Jasmine Holland, the girl whose image illumined the rather drab path in life of the hard-working young bank clerk.

"Oh, Hal," she was crying, "come quick to Pomander Lodge! Genevra Tressady has been poisoned—murdered!"

Inderwick almost dropped the receiver.

"Jasmine, you can't mean it!"

"Oh, but it's true, and her brother is away and there's nobody but me to take charge. There is some terrible mystery about it. She's locked in her study and we can't get in. You'll come at once, won't you, Hal?"

"I'll be with you as soon as a taxi can bring me!"

Inderwick had no difficulty in obtaining permission to leave his work and go to Pomander Lodge. Both Genevra Tressady and her brother, Arnold, had for several years been substantial clients of Palford Brothers & Palford, and the senior member, speaking for the firm, bade Inderwick assure Mr. Arnold Tressady that Palford Brothers & Palford were deeply shocked and grieved at the untimely and



violent death of his talented sister, and would esteem it a favor if he would designate some way in which the firm might be of assistance to him.

During Inderwick's hurried ride to Hampstead, where Pomander Lodge was situated, he made a rapid mental review of what he knew concerning the Tressadys and their household. It seemed almost incredible that Genevra Tressady, in the prime of beautiful womanhood and in the prime, too, of her career as a successful playwright, should have been done to death by criminal means. How could a woman of so kindly and philanthropic a nature have evoked an enemy deadly enough to take her life? He recalled her goodness to Jasmine Holland, engaged as her secretary, but actually treated as a dearly-loved younger sister. Jasmine, in answer to her advertisement for a secretary, had come to her as a stranger, an orphaned, penniless, West Country girl, without a friend in London to vouch for her. But Genevra Tressady had liked the girl and, being of an impulsive, independent character, had waived all question of references and engaged her upon the spot. In fact, to accept people at their face value, and to scorn the making of inquiries as to their antecedents, was Miss Tressady's idiosyncrasy, if so it might be termed. It was said that no servant at the Lodge had ever been asked to furnish a reference—their employment was simply a matter of

whether or not their personality pleased Miss Tressady.

Arnold Tressady was the exact antithesis of his sister. A man of reserved, self-centred temperament, he admitted no persons on terms of intimacy until he had first subjected them to a scathing study of their past and present habits, their interests in life and their motives in seeking his acquaintance. Many would-be satellites—for Arnold Tressady in his line of literary work, the historical and biographical, was no less famed than his sister—failed to “measure up” to this pitiless character analysis. Consequently Arnold Tressady had a wide circle of acquaintances, but no intimates, and lived, for the most part, by himself in a world peopled by the great personages of the past and bounded by the manuscript pages of his “Biographical History of Florence,” the monumental work he was then busy upon and which would, his publisher assured the reading-public, display conspicuously Tressady’s abilities as a keen and unerring analyst of mind and character.

Unfortunately, perhaps, Tressady had applied his “character tests” no less ruthlessly to his sister’s suitors than to those who sought his regard, the result being that he had alienated one and all, with the exception of Hildreth Revelstoke, wealthy clubman, literary dilettante, and backer of many dramatic successes—among them the latest play from

the pen of Genevra Tressady. With Revelstoke, Arnold Tressady was reported to be more nearly intimate than he had ever before been known to be with either man or woman. As a matter of fact, women played but a very minor rôle in Tressady's self-absorbed life, and it was his evident wish that his sister should follow his precedent in avoiding the distractions of *affaires de coeur* and devote herself wholeheartedly to her profession. It caused at first no little comment that Tressady not only failed to discourage Revelstoke's attentions to his sister but, in addition, accepted him as a friend and even intimate.

Inderwick had no time for further reflections. The taxicab drew up before an ivy-covered, two-storied house with Georgian façade and set in a garden bright with old-fashioned flowers.

In answer to his ring Jasmine Holland opened the door. The girl's brown eyes were dark with horror.

"Hal, Oh, Hal!" was all she could say for a moment.

Inderwick was shy, English, and abrupt, so he resisted the temptation to take the trembling girl into his arms, and instead merely pressed the cold little hands she flung out to him, asking almost sharply, "Have you the study door unlocked?"

Jasmine shivered. "It's locked on the *inside*—the key is in the keyhole."

“Then it’s suicide, not murder,” declared Inderwick. “She must have locked the door and taken the poison with deliberate intent. But”—a sudden thought striking him—“how do you know she is dead—or that she even took poison—if you can’t get in?”

“She screamed out as though in agony, ‘You have poisoned me—poisoned me!’ Then I heard her fall. I called her by name and beat on the door, but there has been no sound from the room since that fall. I have tried to get Giovanni—the butler, you know—to break in the door, but he will not even go near it. He acts very strangely, as though he were stupefied with fear.”

“Where is the fellow now?”

Jasmine made a gesture of despair.

“Down in the kitchen telling Weatherley, for the hundredth time, that nothing can induce him to go near a room where murder has been done. If only I knew where to send for Mr. Tressady!”

“Jasmine,” said Inderwick with determination, “we *must* get into that room. Miss Tressady may still be alive and in need of a doctor.”

“I’ve had Weatherley telephone for a doctor. He ought to be here any minute.”

“I am glad of that, Jasmine, but in the meantime I am going to get into that room.” And Inderwick,

followed by the girl, hurried up a fine, well-staircase, handsomely panelled.

Genevra Tressady's study was the second room from the head of the stairs. Inderwick rapped sharply upon the closed door and shook the handle, which would not yield.

"Miss Tressady, Miss Tressady!"

He listened tensely, his ear pressed against the panels. He could hear nothing—not even a sigh.

"I knew she was dead," Jasmine moaned.

Inderwick was strongly-built and muscular—the result of football days at Rugby—and he put all his heaving strength into a drive against the door. But the oak, solid and bronze-set, scarcely quivered under his attack. He was about to hurl himself a second time against the resisting wood, when, from the breathless silence within, there rang out a hoarse and raucous cry that sent Jasmine tottering against the wainscot of the hallway and drew the fresh color from Inderwick's cheeks.

"Nella, Nella, Elfinella!" pealed through the key-hole of that locked door.

"By the Lord Harry! what is it?" cried Inderwick, aghast. "It's not *her* voice."

Jasmine leaned speechless against the wainscotting, pressing her hands against her ears as though to shut out the echo of that cry.

"We've more than ever got to get in now," de-

clared Inderwick, in a voice that he strove to keep firm. "Jasmine, dear, go down and tell Giovanni to bring me up some tool to break the lock with. Tell him he need not be afraid—I will do the smashing and the entering."

But Jasmine seemed incapable of movement. Her eyes were filled with a new and more intense horror.

"It can't be," she whispered, "it can't be!"

At that moment the uncanny cry shrieked out again from the locked study, this time in accents of agonized reproach.

"Nella, Elfinella!"

Jasmine flung out her hands as though in protest.

"No, no!" she moaned, and fled wildly down the stairs.

## CHAPTER II

### BEHIND THE CURTAINS OF THE ALCOVE

JASMINE'S flight was halted by the peremptory ringing of the front door bell. Clinging to the newel-post as though for support, she stood without speech or movement on the lower stair, her gypsy complexion blanched an olive white.

Weatherley, the middle-aged, matronly woman who served as working housekeeper and general factotum, admitted Dr. Hughes and a tall, angular, ferret-faced man whom the former introduced as "Coroner Purdy."

"The coroner happened to be in my office when your call came," Dr. Hughes began with professional briskness, "and, as you believed it a case of murder, I brought him with me. He has telephoned to Scotland Yard and there's a detective on the way here."

Jasmine suddenly found her voice.

"There is no need of all this. Weatherley was mistaken—it is not murder—it is simply suicide."

"Why, Miss Jasmine!" remonstrated Weatherley.

"You did not think it suicide a few minutes ago," reminded Inderwick, who stood now on the stair above her.

“I was too overcome at first to have any rational thoughts. But the door is locked on the inside, so it *must* be suicide. You said that yourself, Hal.”

“I have changed my mind,” he answered gravely.

The coroner started up the stairs with the eagerness of a hound on the trail.

“Door locked on the inside, eh? Well, there are windows, of course.”

“Only a skylight,” Jasmine responded quickly, “and that is barred, so you see it could not be murder, because no one could get in or out of the room.”

“Miss Tressady herself could have let the murderer in, and for all we know he may still be there,” rejoined the coroner. “*That’s* what we’re going to find out. Has any one here an implement to break in the door?—ten to one the lock’s a tough one.”

“Will this do, signore?” asked a curiously repressed voice from the depths of the hall.

A man in plain butler’s livery, his eyes dark and glancing, his face lantern-jawed and of a thin swarthiness that bespoke the foreigner, was approaching. He carried a heavy-handed poker which he offered to Coroner Purdy.

The latter took it without comment and mounted rapidly to the locked study, the others following him. Once more there was total silence within the room—that raucous, startling cry was not repeated; the only sound to be heard was the splintering of wood



under the concerted efforts of the four men, for the Italian butler had recovered from his reputed terror and now exhibited an extraordinary anxiety to enter the room. As a matter of fact, when the door at length crashed in, Giovanni was the first to spring into the study. Inderwick had a confused vision of a quick, surreptitious, stooping movement on the part of the butler, followed by a panther-like leap across the room, and then he lost all account of Giovanni's doings in the spectacle that met his eyes.

Prone on the floor near her writing-table, her glazing eyes staring up at the barred skylight, lay Genevra Tressady. She was clad in a soft rose-colored *négligée* which offered a sharp contrast to the strange purplish hue of her features, now swollen and set in agony. Her hair, loosened by the fall, clustered in a disordered mass about the pitiful face, so animated, so beautiful when Inderwick had seen it last. Her right arm, outflung and bare from the elbow, showed curiously swollen and rigid, and the veins in the upturned wrist stood out like purple whipcord.

The doctor, motioning the horrified women back into the hall, knelt down by the body and hurriedly opened his medicine case. Coroner Purdy, bidding Inderwick mount guard in the doorway to see that no hidden person made an escape, began a rapid, but none-the-less thorough, investigation of the

room. This, with the absence of windows to break the continuity of its circular walls, presented a compact, somewhat prison-like aspect which not even the simple elegance of the furnishings could entirely eliminate. The coroner's eye swept searchingly over the exquisite eighteenth-century furniture—the well-filled bookcase, the old, upright clock, the Jacobean writing-table with the Chippendale seat before it, and finally a low chest of drawers placed across an alcove hung with curtains of rose-colored velvet. Inderwick's gaze, like the coroner's, remained fixed upon that curtained alcove. Did he imagine it, or was there indeed some indistinct sound, some stir behind those heavy draperies? The coroner, too, appeared to have the same impression, for he made a sudden movement toward the alcove. An exclamation from the doctor checked him.

“Quick! get some water! There is still a little life here!”

In the confusion that ensued, all failed to hear hurried footsteps mounting the stairs, and, when a man's voice, vibrant with suspense, demanded to know what the trouble was, everyone, including the doctor, started.

Jasmine was the first to reply. She turned in a frightened, piteous way to the newcomer, a man of tall and powerful build with iron-grey hair and moustache and keen, piercing eyes.

"Mr. Tressady," she faltered, "your sister has been—that is, I mean, she has taken poison."

"*Taken poison!*" Arnold Tressady strode into the study, and stood there, looking down at his sister.

"Genevra!" he said with a depth of emotion that Inderwick had not believed him capable of, "Genevra, what has happened?"

There was a flicker of understanding on the dying woman's face. Slowly her eyes turned downward from the barred skylight, but they rested not upon her brother kneeling now by her side, instead they remained fixed on a magnificent tiger-skin rug spread on the floor near her, and over which Giovanni stood in an attitude of tension. This rug was of striking appearance, being mounted and stuffed in such fashion that both head and shoulders were elevated more than is usual with animal-skin rugs, and thus gave one the impression that the beast was poised for a spring. The snarling tiger's head, with its yellow, beady eyes, seemed to compel and hold Miss Tressady's gaze. She made a futile effort to speak.

Arnold Tressady took a glass of water from Weatherley's ready hand, and, supporting his sister's head against his knee with the awkward gentleness of a man unaccustomed to performing little acts of tenderness, forced a small quantity of the liquid between her lips.

“Genevra,” he urged again, “tell us what has happened.”

A tremor shook the dying woman. With a supreme effort she raised her right arm and pointed to the snarling head reared above the rug.

“The tiger’s eye!” she said, faintly but distinctly.

Then her head fell back against her brother’s supporting knee.

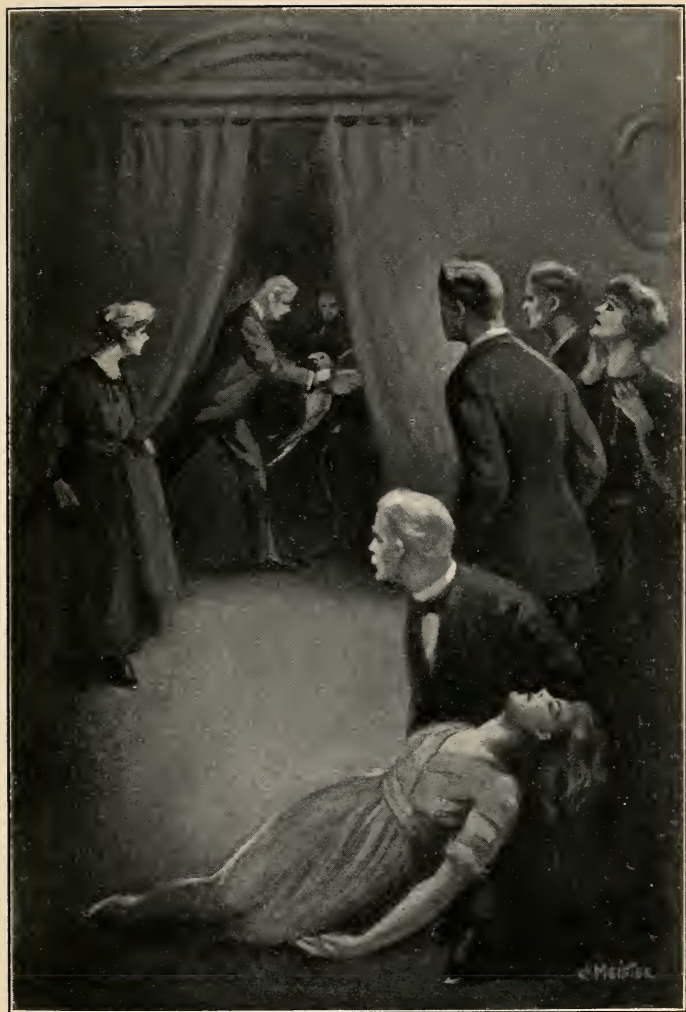
Dr. Hughes bent over her.

“She has gone!”

The hush that succeeded his words was broken by a stir and a kind of metallic clinking sound from behind the curtains of the alcove. Once again that harsh cry, vibrating with anguished reproach, rang out:

“Nella, Elfinella!”

Giovanni sprang behind the curtains.



“THE TWO MEN WERE STRUGGLING WITH SOMETHING  
THAT GASPED AND FOUGHT TO FREE ITSELF”



## CHAPTER III

### THE MISSING PLAY

SWIFT of movement as Giovanni was, Arnold Tressady was scarcely less so. As the latter plunged through the curtains, Inderwick caught a glimpse of wire grating and of the Italian furiously bending and breaking it.

Another piercing scream of "Elfinella, Elfi——!" was choked off in guttural moans.

Weatherley, with a face of distress, pushed by the coroner and flung aside the curtains behind which the two men were struggling with something that gasped and choked and fought to free itself.

"Giovanni, let the poor thing be! You know what store Miss Tressady set by him."

Coroner Purdy stepped authoritatively into the alcove. "Mr. Tressady," in a challenging voice, "why do you and your butler think it worth while to strangle a miserable parrot?"

Arnold Tressady's hand slowly loosed its grip on the feathered neck of a great scarlet macaw. The huge bird fluttered limply to the floor, emitting hoarse, inarticulate sounds. Giovanni glowered down upon it as though his fingers itched to complete the

work his master had commenced, whereupon Weatherley, with an indignant look, picked up the macaw and mothered it in her arms.

The coroner repeated his question more trenchantly than before.

Arnold Tressady glanced back at his sister's still form. His eyes were strained.

"The creature's screams seemed a desecration!"

Coroner Purdy looked sharply at master and servant as they stood before him in the alcove, the broken cage between them.

"A desecration, no doubt," he conceded, "but don't you think, Mr. Tressady, that the cries of this bird may well have been a repetition of your sister's cries, calling out against her slayer; in fact, calling her slayer by name!"

"No, no!" Jasmine Holland burst forth.

The coroner wheeled upon the girl, scrutinizing her for the space of a minute, then he turned again to Arnold Tressady.

"I am asking you, Mr. Tressady, if you do not believe that this parrot was echoing your sister's cries of reproach against her slayer?"

Arnold Tressady's mouth tightened.

"Your notion seems to me a preposterous phantasy. Moreover, it is not certain that my sister *was* slain. As far as I can understand all this, she was found dying in a locked room—apparently poisoned.



I know no reason why she should take her own life, but neither do I know why any one else should have taken it. I think I am not exaggerating when I say that every one who knew her, loved her. As her brother, I am qualified to state that she had innumerable friends—but no—enemies.” His voice, however, held a curious intonation and a slight hesitancy.

Dr. Hughes stepped forward.

“I am afraid you are mistaken in believing that Miss Tressady had no enemies. She did not *swallow* the poison which killed her—there is no trace of it upon her lips, in her mouth or in her throat—I find that it was injected into her veins in some mysterious and diabolical manner.”

Arnold Tressady’s powerful frame shook.

“God! it *can’t* be!” Some awful suspicion seemed to have occurred to him.

The coroner pressed nearer.

“Mr. Tressady, who or what is Elfinella?”

Something at that moment impelled Inderwick to glance at Jasmine. She stood with hands convulsively clasped, her eyes fixed on Arnold Tressady’s. Inderwick’s heart sank. Why was Jasmine so affected by that word or name, Elfinella? And why had she suddenly become anxious that Miss Tressady’s death should be considered suicide? What could she know of her benefactor’s tragic end? Inderwick hated himself for such thoughts. Of course,

she knew nothing of Genevra Tressady's death. And yet, why——

The glance Arnold Tressady shot back at Jasmine was full of significance—to Inderwick's excited imagination it seemed to convey an assurance—; but he folded his arms squarely and answered the coroner with cold deliberation.

“Who or what Elfinella is can have no possible bearing upon my sister's death, whether her death be suicide or murder.”

Almost against his will, Inderwick stole another glance at Jasmine. Undeniably the tension of her features had lessened. Inderwick felt miserably unhappy. Elfinella, then, was more than a word to her.

“I am inclined to question your statement, Mr. Tressady,” said Coroner Purdy directly.

Tressady's steel-grey, deep-set eyes darkened.

“You speak in your official capacity, sir, otherwise——” He checked himself with an effort. After a moment he asked in a voice which even his will power could not keep entirely firm, “Is it necessary that my sister should remain longer—there—on the floor?”

“On the contrary,” Coroner Purdy answered in a milder tone, “I am going to ask Dr. Hughes to assist me in carrying the body into another room where we can make a careful investigation into the manner of

her death. I shall leave Inspector Burton of Scotland Yard"—he nodded toward a youngish man with sharp, aggressive eyes and a bull-dog set to his jaw who, some minutes before, had quietly entered the room and stood now surveying the study and its occupants with keen and impartial scrutiny—"I shall leave Inspector Burton to pick up here what clues he can while we are making the post-mortem. Perhaps, Mr. Tressady, you will direct us to your sister's room."

"And then, sir, I'd like you to come back here at once," broke in the detective, "I shall have some questions to put to you."

During the removal of Miss Tressady's body, Inspector Burton in business-like fashion jotted down some rapid notes in a small memorandum book. Then he turned suddenly to Inderwick who had just placed a chair for Jasmine.

"Your name, sir?"

"H. P. Inderwick," he answered with dignity.

"Henry P.?" suggested Burton.

Inderwick flushed.

"It's Harold Percival," he admitted, adding hastily, "I am a clerk in the banking-house of Palford Brothers & Palford."

Inderwick may have been supersensitive, but it appeared to him that the detective subdued a smile.

"Mr. Harold Percival Inderwick," he repeated

with an exasperating drawl. "Now, how do you come in on this case?"

"I am a friend of Miss Holland, who was Miss Tressady's secretary," Inderwick replied somewhat stiffly, "Miss Holland telephoned me that Miss Tressady had——"

"Committed suicide," Jasmine broke in before he could finish his sentence.

Burton chewed the end of his pencil reflectively, staring first at Inderwick, amazed and a bit indignant, and then at Jasmine, whose pretty, gypsy-like face was still pale and a little tense.

"Suicide, eh?" he drawled. "I say," whirling suddenly upon Weatherley, who was still fondling the exhausted macaw, "can't you make that bird speak again? I've got the idea that chap doesn't think it's suicide."

"Jocko has speak meaningless words, signore," remarked the Italian butler.

Burton subjected the butler to a sharp scrutiny which plainly made the fellow ill at ease.

"'Meaningless words,' eh?" repeated the detective, still with that provoking drawl which was so at variance with his general air of alert aggressiveness. "Now what were those 'meaningless words' you were saying, Mr. Jocko, when you got switched off so painfully? 'Elfi—, Elfi—,'" he prompted, "come on, old boy, what was it, 'Elfi——'"

The macaw was regarding him with glittering, interested eyes.

"Nella! Elfinella!" he suddenly shrieked again.

At the repetition of that cry, imitating, as before, by its intonation, reproach and anguish, Jasmine dropped her face in her hands with a little moan, while Giovanni made a threatening movement toward the bird, nestled in Weatherley's arms.

Burton hastily interposed himself between the butler and Weatherley.

"Timkins! Chapin!" he called, addressing two police officials who were standing in the hall. "One of you take this parrot and see that nobody harms him, and the other one go buy a strong cage for him. He's Exhibit A, that's what he is, and I'll lay a guinea Mr. Jocko isn't such a featherhead as he looks."

Timkins and Chapin had difficulty in obeying Burton's orders, for the macaw, suspecting them to be enemies, snapped at them viciously with his great curved beak. The result was that Weatherley carried the bird for them, after delivering her mind on the stupidity of men in general and constables in particular.

Close upon the exit of Jocko, Arnold Tressady reëntered the room, his strong face seared by emotion.

"I believe," addressing Burton, "you wished to ask me some questions?"

Inderwick's heart sank again. Why should Jasmine start at these words and look so appealingly at Mr. Tressady? He was certain, too, that no movement, no emotion on the girl's part, was lost to the keen-eyed detective.

Inspector Burton, memorandum book in hand, stepped nearer Arnold Tressady.

"I don't want to poach on the coroner's preserves, but I'd like to know when you last saw your sister alive?"

"We lunched together at half-past one. After luncheon my sister went immediately to this room—I understood that she intended to spend the afternoon writing. She was working upon a new play."

Burton walked over to the Jacobean writing-table and surveyed the articles upon it. They consisted of a tray of newly-sharpened pencils, a fountain pen with the point adjusted for use, and a block of paper with a few pencilled notes upon it, written in a clear and decisive hand. Burton then opened the single drawer of the table. It was empty, save for a fresh block of paper and a steel eraser.

"What has become of the play your sister was working on?"

Mr. Tressady appeared surprised that the question should be addressed to him.

"I have not the slightest idea. I spent the afternoon at the British Museum, absorbed in my own work. When I returned here, I found the house overrun with police officials and my sister—dying!" For a moment emotion choked his utterance. Then, with an effort, he became once more the cold, reserved man that Inderwick had always known him to be. "No doubt Miss Holland can tell you about the play. She was my sister's secretary."

Burton addressed himself to Jasmine with a kind of calculated abruptness.

"Are these notes in pencil"—he took the block of paper from the table—"in your handwriting or Miss Tressady's?"

"In Miss Tressady's. She always did all the writing of her plays. I simply copied them on the typewriter." Jasmine caught Burton's glance of inquiry, and added, "The typewriter is kept in my sitting-room. Miss Tressady found the click of it distracting."

The detective, after making a few more notes in his memorandum book, shifted the trend of his questioning.

"Where were you this afternoon, Miss Holland, from the time Miss Tressady came up to this room until you telephoned Mr. Inderwick?"

Inderwick had been congratulating himself that Jasmine was regaining poise, but this new question

brought a hopeless, hunted expression into her face. Somewhat incoherently she replied that Miss Tressady had not needed her services that afternoon and so she had occupied herself in writing letters in her own sitting-room.

“Then you don’t know if Miss Tressady had a caller?”

Jasmine studied the detective’s aggressive face as though trying to make out what had prompted this question. Finally she answered emphatically:

“Miss Tressady had no caller.”

“How do you know that, if you were not with her?” Burton flashed back.

But Jasmine was ready for him.

“The door of my sitting-room was open, and it looks out upon the stairs. No one could have come up without my knowledge.”

Burton smiled peculiarly.

“Was Miss Tressady writing this new play with pen or pencil?”

“She was writing it with that very pen that is lying on her table now.”

The detective’s smile became markedly unpleasant.

“I thought so! Then you have the play in your possession, Miss Holland?”

Jasmine seemed bewildered at the question.

“Certainly not. When Miss Tressady gave me



permission to spend the afternoon as I chose, she was sitting before the table, the manuscript spread out upon it, and the pen in her hand."

"Exactly," Burton agreed with satisfaction. "Then she must have been interrupted in her work by some one who entered the room, stole the play, and, I am afraid, poisoned her into the bargain. Come now, Miss Holland," his aggressiveness increasing, "you know she had a visitor. It was some one you were acquainted with, too. *Who* was it?"

The girl tottered to her feet. She was on the verge of collapse.

"Miss Tressady had no visitor!" she protested.

"Sorry to dispute a lady," said Burton in an ugly tone, "but you're lying, Miss Holland. Who was this visitor? Was it"—stepping nearer the trembling girl—"was it—*Elfinella*?"

The detective was unexpectedly jerked around on his heel by a pair of powerful arms and found himself confronted by the blazing eyes of Arnold Tressady.

"If my sister *did* have a visitor, sir, it was no one by the name of Elfinella. I shall expect you to remember that."

Knotted, passionate veins stood out on Arnold Tressady's forehead and the indignation that burned him was plainly almost beyond his control.

Inspector Burton stared unblinkingly into the threatening fire of Tressady's eyes.

"A devilish interesting name—Elfinella," he observed with his most exasperating drawl, "a bit electrifying too, eh? Here is Coroner Purdy now. I dare say he will enjoy reading these notes I've jotted down. And—you are not to leave the room, Miss Holland. You're a no-end useful witness."

## CHAPTER IV

### CLUES LEADING AND MISLEADING

CORONER PURDY began at once an impromptu and preliminary inquest, prefacing it by the bare statement that Dr. Hughes had been correct in declaring that Miss Tressady's death was due to the injection into her veins of some poison as yet unknown. The name of this poison and the manner of its injection could not be accurately determined until a more detailed post-mortem had been held, the results of which would be disclosed at the public inquest which the coroner set for Tuesday week, thus allowing seven full days for medical examiners and detectives to complete their reports.

"But surely," objected Arnold Tressady, "there must be some abrasion to show where the poison entered."

"We have as yet discovered none. The only marks that might be termed abrasions are found upon your sister's fingers, upon the second, third and little fingers of the right hand. In fact, Mr. Tressady, these abrasions incline me to believe that she was robbed before she was murdered."

“Robbed!” the horrified exclamation came from Jasmine Holland.

Both the coroner and Inspector Burton bestowed on the girl a sharply scrutinizing glance before which her eyes fell.

“Kindly explain your meaning, sir,” said Arnold Tressady, with the calmness of one to whom the worst has already been told.

“First tell me, Mr. Tressady, if your sister was in the habit of wearing rings?”

“She wore always a sard ring of antique setting upon the third finger of her left hand, and frequently, though not always, a tourmaline upon the corresponding finger of her right hand. She had a fancy for odd gems in odd settings, but cared little for really precious stones. You have, of course, observed these rings of my sister’s, Miss Holland?”

“Yes.”

Jasmine’s answer was scarcely audible.

“Then,” remarked the coroner gravely, “I am probably correct in saying that Miss Tressady has been robbed. There are now no rings upon her fingers, but instead scratches, almost lacerations, showing that her rings were roughly jerked off. No doubt the scratches were made by the brutal fingernails of the robber and murderer when she offered resistance.”

Giovanni suddenly spoke up again.

“Perhaps she have tear them off herself in the—the death agony?”

“Well, it’s possible,” admitted the coroner, “but the scratches seem to me too deep to have been made by the lady’s own nails, which are rounded and smooth. What do you say, Dr. Hughes?”

“I agree with you,” was the firm reply. “I should even go further and assert positively that these scratches were made by the stronger and probably jagged nails of an impatient and infuriated man.”

Coroner Purdy nodded.

“That is my own belief. Suppose, Inspector Burton, you examine carefully the floor of this room and look under the articles of furniture as well. It is possible the thief may have dropped the rings in his haste or fury.”

Inspector Burton was already upon his knees, searching the floor with the eagerness of the proverbial sleuth-hound.

Inderwick felt that it was now his duty to speak.

“I do not think you will find the rings on the floor, Mr. Burton. I am under the impression that the butler has them in his pocket.”

The Italian turned upon him with a snarl.

“What you mean by that, signore? I am not in this room all day till you break in the door.”

Inderwick regarded him steadily.

“When we broke in the door, you were the first to

enter. I saw you stoop and pick up something from the floor. I have the impression it was a ring."

Arnold Tressady sternly viewed the livid-faced butler.

"Was it a ring?"

His voice was masterful, menacing.

Giovanni stared back at him in helpless terror. Slowly and with great reluctance he drew from his pocket a small paste-board box such as jewelers use for rings. Removing the cover, he took from the box a ring with a translucent blood-red stone held in a curious, antique setting.

Mr. Tressady took the ring from his hand, studied it a moment, then passed it to the coroner.

"This is my sister's favorite ring, an ancient sard, an heirloom in my—our—family for generations."

Coroner Purdy addressed the butler.

"Why did you pick up and then secrete this ring?"

Giovanni seemed at first unable to answer. Finally he said thickly:

"I saw it on the floor and I think some one will step on it. I have place it in my pocket—what you call—unconsciously. I have not intend to keep it."

His explanation was plausible enough, but his obvious terror was out of all proportion to the surface facts.

"I think," said the coroner, "I will retain this ring as one of the exhibits at the inquest."

“Certainly, sir,” agreed Arnold Tressady, “but I am bound to say that I believe Giovanni would eventually have given the ring to me. I have never found him dishonest—since he has been in my employ.”

The last clause sounded almost like an *arrière-pensée*—as though dragged in out of a strict sense of justice, but with reservations behind it.

Coroner Purdy looked at Tressady inquiringly and might have pressed the matter, had not Inspector Burton, who had been carefully searching every inch of flooring in the windowless study, risen to his feet with an exultant air. In his hand he held some blue silk threads and several small, common pins.

“Weatherley, when was this room swept last?”

Weatherley evidently deemed the question impertinent.

“I swept and dusted it myself this morning,” she said tartly, “and left it in apple-pie order, not a speck of dust anywhere, the rugs and the floor like new, the furniture polished and shining, and if there’s any dirt here now, it’s you prying detective bobbies have brought it in.”

Her words served to increase Burton’s exultant air.

“Then, Miss Holland,” he declared, turning sharply to the girl, “I’ve got proof that Miss Tressady *did* have a visitor this afternoon—a woman,

too, unless Weatherley overlooked these blue threads and these pins when she swept the room."

Weatherley bridled.

"When I sweep rooms, sir, I do it thorough. There was no threads and pins on the floor when I finished with the room, and no more do they prove Miss Tressady had a visitor. They must have been dropped by Miss Martin, the seamstress, when she come to fit Miss Tressady just after luncheon. Nobody would call her a visitor, now would they, sir?"

Burton's interest increased.

"What is this Miss Martin's Christian name?"

Weatherley, not knowing, appealed to Jasmine Holland.

"Miss Martin's name is Helen," the girl answered in a troubled tone, and looked at Burton inquiringly, as though trying to discover his reason for asking this question.

"Helen," the detective repeated, "Helen—Nellie. Always called Nellie or Nella—something like that, wasn't she, Miss Holland?"

A curious kind of apprehension began to dawn on the girl's face.

"Why do you ask that?"

Inspector Burton waited an appreciable while before replying, scanning meantime the faces of the other members of the little household at Pomander Lodge. There was tense restraint on Arnold Tres-



sady's; on Giovanni's, indubitable terror, but Weatherley's showed only bewilderment.

At length Burton drawled out:

"Nellie or Nell are the usual nicknames for Helen, I believe, and friend Jocko is jolly fond of different forms of the name Nellie. How does his song go? 'Nella, Elfinella?'"

Arnold Tressady permitted his features to relax into a half smile.

"Ingenious, very, Mr. Burton, but almost too theoretical, is it not, for Scotland Yard? It reminds me of the marvellous deductions of that brilliant personage in detective fiction, Mr. Sherlock Holmes."

Burton resented this and showed it.

"Then, Mr. Tressady," his tone bullying, "since you won't have it that Jocko's 'Nella, Elfinella' refers to this Helen Martin, who does it refer to? You know well enough and so does Miss Holland."

Again those knotted veins of passion started out on Tressady's forehead, but his answer was amazing in its self-possessed frankness.

"I have no intention of denying that I know who Elfinella is. However, as it is impossible that she is concerned in any way in my sister's death, I shall answer no further questions regarding her, as I consider it entirely unnecessary for her to be harried by police officials, however well-meaning they may be. It is true that this lady is also known to Miss Hol-

land; but I feel certain that Miss Holland will follow my example and refuse to answer questions regarding her. To be plain, Mr. Burton, I consider your manner of eliciting information decidedly offensive.”

Burton was about to make an angry retort when the coroner intervened.

“With your permission, Inspector Burton,” his tone sarcastic, “I will now take charge of this inquiry. It’s a fault of yours at every inquest to forget who the presiding official is, and I don’t altogether blame Mr. Tressady for criticizing your manner of questioning witnesses.”

“Very well, sir,” said Burton stiffly, and proceeded to examine further the floor and walls of the windowless room. After a moment he stooped and, picking up a visiting-card that lay half under the bookcase, placed it in his pocket without comment.

The coroner, not observing this action, turned to the butler.

“At what hour did you admit Miss Martin?”

The question from its apparent innocence seemed to afford Giovanni relief, and he answered readily:

“The hall clock was striking two, signore, when she ring the bell.”

“And when did she leave?”

“That I do not know, signore. I am not call when she go.”

“Miss Holland,” said the coroner then, “if the door of your sitting-room was open as you have stated, you must have seen Miss Martin come up the stairs.”

Jasmine flushed.

“I did see her, but you asked me if Miss Tressady had a visitor, and I did not think you would place her seamstress exactly in that category.”

Inderwick wished that the coroner was as content to accept this explanation as he was, but that official, on the contrary, frowned and said curtly, “It is my opinion, Miss Holland, that you tried to evade an issue in your answer. Miss Tressady received the seamstress in this room, did she not?”

His rebuke angered the girl.

“Since you think I ‘evade issues,’ why do you not trust to the deductive evidence of pins and threads instead of troubling to ask me?”

Coroner Purdy smiled indulgently.

“I don’t expect you always to ‘evade issues,’ Miss Holland. Now then, how long did Miss Martin remain with Miss Tressady?”

Jasmine considered.

“I should say it was about quarter after three when she left.”

“Did she show signs of haste or emotion as she went down stairs?”

“I did not look up, but I heard her going down the

stairs with her usual quiet, gliding step. She's rather a mouse-like little person."

"Little, eh?" asked the coroner quickly. "Sort of—er—elf-like?"

Jasmine threw at him a startled glance. Did Jocko's cry of "Elfinella!" reëcho through her mind? However, she soon recovered herself.

"Miss Martin is small and frail, very demure, almost shrinking in her manner. She—she is a very efficient seamstress."

"Did Miss Tressady lock the door immediately after Miss Martin left her?" the coroner asked next.

"I—I don't remember hearing her lock the door. I was busy writing letters——"

"Did you hear Miss Tressady moving about or groaning or crying out after Miss Martin's departure?"

The persistence and trend of his queries roused Jasmine to defiance.

"I do not know why you should ask such questions about Helen Martin. She had nothing whatever to do with Miss Tressady's death. She was simply her seamstress, that is all."

Coroner Purdy ignored the girl's outburst.

"Where does Helen Martin live? Can she be reached by telephone?"

The coroner's cool, authoritative manner calmed the overwrought girl.

“Miss Martin lives here in Hampstead in the lodging-house at No. 9 Pond Street,” she replied, and gave also the desired telephone number.

The coroner thereupon detailed an officer to visit No. 9 Pond Street, and, in the meantime, directed Burton to telephone Miss Martin and request her immediate presence at Pomander Lodge.

“Say nothing of Miss Tressady’s death,” he bade the detective. “Say simply that she is ill, needs an additional attendant and has asked for Miss Martin. You can represent yourself as being the doctor in charge.”

The telephone was in the hall, and Burton, before leaving the room, gave the coroner, with a whispered comment, the visiting-card he had picked up.

Coroner Purdy read it with interest.

“I should judge that Miss Tressady had another visitor this afternoon—a gentleman. This card is too fresh to have been long upon the floor, and Weatherley in her morning sweeping did not overlook it, I am sure.”

“No, sir,” said Weatherley promptly, “that card wasn’t on the floor or in the room when I swept and dusted.”

Inderwick felt curious about that tiny bit of paste-board in the coroner’s hand. He had no doubt that it was the visiting-card of Hildreth Revelstoke, Miss Tressady’s suitor, her brother’s friend, and the pro-

ducer of her latest play. But why should Jasmine keep his visit a secret? Why indeed should she do the many inexplicable things that she had done that afternoon?

Coroner Purdy now read aloud the name upon the visiting-card. To Inderwick's amazement it was not that of Hildreth Revelstoke, nor indeed of any one of whom he had heard.

"'Mr. Lawrence Trent, The Follies' Theatre,'" the coroner read. "Is any one here acquainted with this man?"

Arnold Tressady made a gesture of dissent.

"I seem to have heard the name. If he is a theatrical man, my sister probably had a business acquaintance with him."

"Know anything of him, Miss Holland?" asked the coroner.

Inderwick, to his dismay, noted that Jasmine paled at the question.

"He plays in the orchestra at the Follies' Theatre," she answered, striving vainly to make her voice firm. "He is also a composer and was writing the music for Miss Tressady's new play."

"The play that is missing?"

"Yes."

"Miss Holland," severely, "why have you withheld the information that Lawrence Trent visited Miss Tressady this afternoon?"

“Because he did not visit her!”

The girl's nerves were at the snapping point and her voice rose hysterically. But there was an accent of truthfulness in her statement that impressed even the coroner.

“Then, Miss Holland,” less harshly, “how did this fresh card come upon the floor?”

Her lip quivered.

“I don't know.”

At this juncture Burton reëntered the room. His jaw was set hard and in his eyes was the impatient ferocity of a bloodhound in leash, scenting the trail of the quarry.

“Miss Helen Martin,” he announced, in a drawling voice, strikingly at variance with the aggressiveness of his appearance, “has packed up and bolted—bag and baggage!”

## CHAPTER V

### ANOTHER FACTOR IN THE CASE

"A VERY unwise proceeding," commented the coroner dryly. "This young woman is undoubtedly an important witness. She must be brought back and forced to testify. Inspector Burton, I leave the matter in your hands."

"You can safely do so, sir," Burton assured him in a confident tone. "I'll have her back in time for the inquest. The landlady says she has no inkling where she has gone, and she seems to be telling the truth; but I intend to put her through a grilling this evening and perhaps I can get more out of her then. So far she has given me only the bare facts that the Martin woman returned to the house about half past three, received a telephone call about four o'clock, and a few minutes later was seen hurrying down Pond Street carrying a bag and a large clothes box. She left nothing in the closet or bureau drawers of her room, so evidently she has no intention of returning."

"You had better trace where the telephone call came from that sent her away in such haste," said the coroner.





“I COULD NOT BUT OVERHEAR SOME OF THE CONVERSATION.”



Burton bridled. "I was about to do that, sir."

As the detective stalked out of the room, Coroner Purdy asked Tressady to explain the reason for the peculiar architecture of the windowless study, with its barred skylight.

"Simply a matter of personal idiosyncrasy which I shared with my sister," Arnold Tressady answered. "My study, as well as hers, has a skylight and no windows. When we were writing we wished no interruptions or distractions from the outside world; a skylight eliminated all such possibilities. The bars were lately added as precautionary measures, because, in the recent robbery at Dwight Mansion, a half mile or so from here, the burglars used scaling ladders to reach the roof and gained entrance through a skylight, the windows being protected by safety devices, as are all the windows here."

"Yes," said the coroner reminiscently, "that Dwight Mansion robbery was cleverly planned and carried out, and, I believe, the burglars have not yet been caught. Now, there are one or two other questions I should like to ask."

As he spoke, he was glancing through the memorandum which Burton had placed in his hands.

"I understand that no one here can account for the disappearance of the play that Miss Tressady was at work upon, and that this Mr. Lawrence Trent

of the Follies' Theatre was composing the music for. I did not know that Miss Tressady ever had a collaborator in her work, nor, in fact, that she ever wrote plays of a musical nature. I've seen several of her plays—fine, gripping stuff they were, too—wasn't this missing play something of an innovation?"

"I really know very little about it," Tressady replied. "My sister was not in the habit of discussing her plays with me until they were completed."

"Well, but you can tell me its title, at least," persisted the coroner.

Tressady shook his head.

"If I ever knew, I have forgotten. My sister's secretary, Miss Holland, should be able to answer all questions concerning this drama."

Coroner Purdy looked abashed.

"Of course. I beg your pardon. Miss Holland is the proper person to apply to."

But, when he questioned the girl regarding the contents and title of the missing manuscript, she seemed singularly reluctant to answer.

"A sort of musical play," she finally said vaguely.

The coroner was growing impatient.

"Naturally I understand that, since music was being written for it. But what was its title?"

Inderwick could see no possible reason why Jasmine should hesitate to reply, but he did see that her

evasions and nervousness were prejudicing the coroner against her.

After Coroner Purdy with increasing hostility had reiterated his question, Jasmine, at length, stated that the play was called "Titania's Flight" and that it was an extravaganza.

"'Titania's Flight,' " the coroner repeated musingly. "Titania was queen of the fairies, wasn't she? Was this a fairy extravaganza, Miss Holland?"

"There were fairies in it," she admitted still vaguely.

"A fairy extravaganza with music," said Coroner Purdy. "An innovation certainly for Miss Tressady. How near completion was this play?"

"Miss Tressady was working on the second scene of the last act."

"Who was to produce it?"

"I—I don't know that Miss Tressady ever told me."

Coroner Purdy, in his exasperation at her evasiveness, looked as though he would have enjoyed shaking the girl.

"Miss Tressady may not have told you in so many words, but do you not practically know that the one who was to produce it was the man who produced all her other plays—Mr. Hildreth Revelstoke?"

The coroner's tone angered Jasmine.

"I have nothing to say in regard to Miss Tressady's business arrangements."

"Mr. Revelstoke was in the habit of calling here?"

"Occasionally—on business," she added hastily.

Inderwick looked at Jasmine in surprise. He knew that Hildreth Revelstoke, as the suitor of Genevra Tressady and the friend of her brother, was a frequent visitor at Pomander Lodge and did not by any means come always for business reasons. Why had it become impossible for Jasmine to answer directly or even truthfully any questions concerning Miss Tressady and her affairs?

"When did Mr. Revelstoke call here last?" the coroner was asking now.

"I believe that he called last evening."

"Don't you *know* that he did, Miss Holland?"

Jasmine flushed.

"He did call, but I do not see what possible interest that can have for you." Her tone was one of indignation. "Mr. Revelstoke is a gentleman of the highest qualities. His call has no bearing whatever upon Miss Tressady's death."

Inderwick looked at her in troubled amazement. What was the meaning of her violent partisanship of Hildreth Revelstoke? It could not be that she had allowed herself to become unduly interested in the millionaire clubman who was practically the accepted suitor of her friend and employer? The

young bank clerk felt a momentary pang of jealousy. Hildreth Revelstoke was a man of distinction, handsome, cultured, a favorite with women—But this was absurd! Jasmine had pledged herself to him, Hal, and she was true and staunch. Were they not both saving up for a little home together in the near future? Inderwick felt ashamed of himself.

The coroner had turned now to Arnold Tressady.

“Were you at home when Mr. Revelstoke called upon your sister?”

“No; I spent the entire evening in the reading-room of the British Museum.”

“Is the rumor true, Mr. Tressady, that your sister and Mr. Revelstoke intended to marry?”

Arnold Tressady’s reply was a little ambiguous.

“I do not know what my *sister* intended to do.”

“You mean that Miss Tressady had not given Mr. Revelstoke a definite answer?”

Arnold Tressady fixed coldly hostile eyes upon the coroner.

“I do not discuss my sister’s private affairs.”

Coroner Purdy endeavored to look unabashed.

“It is my duty, sir, to make inquiries, even personal ones, concerning any friend or associate of your sister’s who might be able to throw light upon the cause or manner of her death. Now do you happen to know if Mr. Revelstoke called again today?”

“I do not know.”

Arnold Tressady's bearing was such as to preclude all further questioning upon the subject of Mr. Revelstoke.

A sort of repressed excitement on Weatherley's part drew the coroner's attention.

"Mr. Revelstoke did call today?"

Weatherley looked inquiringly at her master, as though seeking his advice. He did not vouchsafe a glance in her direction. Once more questioned by the coroner, she stated that Mr. Revelstoke had called that morning about ten o'clock. Giovanni had gone to the city on some business and it was she who had admitted the visitor. He asked for Miss Tressady, but she declined to receive him.

"Tell him he must know that I cannot see him! Those were her very words, sir, and she looked pitifully white and upset when she said them."

Arnold Tressady turned a coldly reproving glance upon Weatherley.

"You are not by any chance letting your imagination run away with you?"

Weatherley bristled in self-defense.

"Why wouldn't she say those words, sir, after the way him and her parted last night?"

Upon this Tressady looked as though he would have enjoyed silencing her as he and Giovanni had attempted to silence the macaw. Reserved and unsociable to the point of hostility as Arnold Tres-



sady was, once he had admitted a man to his friendship, he would permit no hint of aspersion against him.

But the coroner was quick to enter upon this new channel of inquiry.

"How did Miss Tressady and Mr. Revelstoke part? It is your duty to tell everything you know about his call here."

There was a dark flush on Arnold Tressady's face.

"I object to these questions concerning Mr. Revelstoke. He was my sister's suitor, he *is* my friend. That should be sufficient for any one to know."

"I disagree with you," said Coroner Purdy incisively. "Every question I am asking may be pertinent to your sister's death. Weatherley, as an officer of the law, I charge you to tell everything you know of Mr. Revelstoke's call here last evening."

"Well, sir, I don't see why I shouldn't, as it's nothing against the gentleman and you say as it's my duty," began Weatherley, thus adjured, but again she looked uneasily at her master, standing now with back disapprovingly turned, frowning down at the tiger's head on which his sister's dying gaze had rested. "Giovanni let Mr. Revelstoke in about eight o'clock," she finally went on, "and Miss Tressady had him come up to this room. I was in Miss Jasmine's sitting-room, helping her with some mending, and we both heard

Miss Tressady lock the door. About twenty minutes afterwards, we heard the door opened very violently and Mr. Revelstoke say in an awful voice: 'I had rather know you were dead, Genevra!' He rushed down the stairs and then Miss Tressady came running out into the hall like as if she was beside herself. 'Hildreth, don't let us part like this!' she cried. But he slammed the outer door, and, when she heard that, she just crumpled up and fell in a heap on the floor.

"Miss Jasmine and I got her up somehow and put her to bed. But I shan't ever forget the look on her face—so crushed, so hopeless. She wouldn't let Miss Jasmine or me stay with her at night, but I kept going to her door to see if she needed anything and each time I heard her sobbing in a muffled, choking way. She didn't come down to breakfast and wouldn't have a thing sent up to her. I didn't see her at all in the morning, till I told her Mr. Revelstoke was here. When I gave him her message, saying she would not see him, he staggered back and said in a broken voice, 'I suppose she knows best.' He went away at once, sir, and I haven't seen him since."

The coroner turned to Mr. Tressady.

"Did you know that matters were strained between your sister and Mr. Revelstoke?"

"I did not." Harsh and uncompromising came the

denial. "My sister seemed like herself at luncheon and I am inclined to think that Weatherley's imagination has colored her account of what took place."

"I'd swear to every word on the Bible, sir," declared Weatherley in an aggrieved tone.

Coroner Purdy motioned her to be silent.

"Has Mr. Revelstoke been notified of Miss Tressady's death?"

"I telephoned his office after calling Mr. Inderwick," said Jasmine. "He was not in, so I left the message with his secretary."

At this juncture Burton reëntered the study. There was satisfaction in his eye.

"I have traced the telephone call that sent Helen Martin away. It came from here—from Pomander Lodge—and the operator is willing to swear that the voice on the wire was a woman's."

Again Inderwick felt the weight of apprehension upon him. Simultaneously he, with the coroner and detective, turned to Jasmine, standing now with downcast eyes behind Weatherley's matronly bulk.

"Did you send this call, Miss Holland?" It was the coroner who voiced the question.

The girl flung up her head with a sort of desperate defiance.

"I did telephone Miss Martin. She—she had done a good deal of sewing for Miss Tressady—I thought

she ought to know—that perhaps she—she could help somehow.”

“But instead,” said the coroner dryly, “she ran away. Just what did you say to her, Miss Holland?”

“I don’t remember my exact words—something to the effect that Miss Tressady was dead.”

“Did you give as your opinion that it was a case of suicide or murder?”

Jasmine’s face was full of distress.

“I don’t remember.”

“I should advise you for your own good, Miss Holland,” said the coroner gravely, “to freshen up your memory in several details between now and the public inquest.”

## CHAPTER VI

### A TELEPHONE IN THE NIGHT

CORONER PURDY drew from Weatherley a full description of the missing seamstress, and thereupon wrote out an advertisement to be inserted in all the morning papers. Helen Martin, it seemed, was about thirty-seven years of age, a woman of small and frail physique, with a pale, thin little face, large, grey eyes, and hair of an indeterminate shade of brown, streaked with grey on the right side. Her street costume consisted ordinarily of a somewhat shabby, long, blue coat and a close-fitting black hat trimmed with white lilacs.

Jasmine Holland was obviously nervous and apprehensive, as she listened to the coroner's interrogation of Weatherley in regard to the little seamstress.

"I do not see," the girl objected, "why there should be such a hue and cry after Miss Martin. She came here to sew for Miss Tressady and she is known to have left the Lodge nearly an hour before we discovered Miss Tressady in a dying condition. How *could* she be concerned in the case?"

The coroner replied by another question.

"Why did she run away, Miss Holland?"

Jasmine hesitated, stared at him in helpless

fashion, and then said rather lamely, "I do not think she has run away. I believe she has simply gone to some quiet place to avoid all this unpleasantness and notoriety. She has a retiring nature, and she is not very strong. My announcement of Miss Tressady's death was a shock to her. She just wanted to get away from it all."

"You have no knowledge where she has gone, Miss Holland?"

"Not the slightest, sir." This time Jasmine's tone carried conviction.

"Miss Holland," the coroner's voice became a shade less harsh, "can you not remember now what you said over the telephone to Helen Martin?"

Distress grew in the girl's eyes. "No!" she declared. "I cannot remember. I was very excited and terrified—I might have said almost anything at such a time."

"You might," the coroner conceded, "but I am inclined to think that the message you sent Miss Martin was a coherent and definite one. Certainly it had the effect of removing for the time being—but not, I think, for long—one who is presumably a material witness in this case. What is your reason, Miss Holland," his voice and manner again becoming hostile, "for wishing Helen Martin's testimony to be suppressed?"

Jasmine shrank back a step. The misery in her

eyes wrung Inderwick's heart—yet, in fairness, he could not blame the coroner for the attitude he took.

“I don't wish her testimony suppressed,” Jasmine faltered, but now there was no ring of truth in tone or words.

Coroner Purdy curtly waived aside her protest. His gaze rested in fascinated scrutiny upon the tiger skin rug and the ferocious head reared above it.

“Mr. Tressady, have you any idea why your sister should have pointed to this rug and why her dying words should have been ‘The tiger's eye?’ ”

Arnold Tressady gloomily shook his head. “I have no idea unless she was in delirium.”

“I should not have said she was in delirium,” the coroner remarked thoughtfully. “It seemed to me there was meaning to her words. What do you think, Inspector Burton?”

“Nothing in it, sir,” was the decided reply. “Just the vagaries of delirium. The thing to do is to run down this Nellie Martin. *She* is tangible, and dying ravings are not.”

Jasmine shot a look of indignation and disgust at the callous detective, but it was lost upon him. Inderwick, like the coroner, was finding himself fascinated by that snarling beast's head. Like a thing of evil, it drew and held one's gaze. Giovanni, too, appeared to find it a compelling object, for still he stood above it, tense and rigid.

The dusk of evening was rapidly settling down, and the coroner suddenly flashed on the electric drop-lamp upon the table. The corners of the study were left in darkness, but the light beat down upon the tiger's head, making it bulk forth from the shadows and causing the yellow eyes to glitter weirdly, and the fang-like teeth in the distended jaws to gleam with almost phosphorescent whiteness.

The coroner turned away abruptly, bidding Giovanni switch on the wall lights. "I can't understand, Mr. Tressady, how a woman of artistic and emotional temperament, as I suppose your sister was, could keep always before her a hideous thing like this tiger rug."

"It had a sentimental value to her," Tressady replied; "an old family friend shot the beast in an Indian jungle, and when he died a few years ago bequeathed this rug to her as his dearest treasure."

"I daresay there was no special meaning to Miss Tressady's final words," mused the coroner. "And yet——"

"Nothing in it, sir," declared Burton again. "The glitter of those yellow eyes would fuddle any one's brain."

But Inderwick found himself wondering. "The tiger's eye!" Odd words for a dying person to utter, and, he remembered that with her last remnant of strength, she had raised her arm and pointed



with deliberation at the snarling head. There must have been purpose in words and gesture.

Coroner Purdy, Dr. Hughes, and Burton were taking their departure now. At Jasmine's request, to which Arnold Tressady acceded with unwonted graciousness, Inderwick prepared to spend the night at Pomander Lodge. After the late dinner, a brief and practically silent meal, Jasmine crept away to her chamber, a pinched, worn look shadowing her young features. Weatherley, too, went up to bed, but Giovanni maintained a sleepless vigil in the kitchen.

Arnold Tressady himself ushered Inderwick into the guest-chamber.

"If you need anything later to make yourself more comfortable, you had better call me. I don't fancy Giovanni will be of much use. The poor devil seems petrified by horror or fear. Frankly, I don't understand his behaviour and I never trusted him overmuch—but then"—with a grim smile—"mine is not a trusting nature. However, I am bound to say that he always seemed devoted to my sister. Well, Inderwick, get as much sleep as you can, and don't hesitate to call me if you want anything. I shall be writing in my study. Sleep will be impossible for me." His voice thickened.

Inderwick wrung his hand in silent sympathy. Then the older man walked heavily away to his

study and closed the door. Inderwick was left alone with his thoughts.

The house was abnormally quiet with that soundless hush which death always casts. Yet once Inderwick fancied he heard a smothered cry from the macaw. Elfinella! The queer name kept echoing through his brain with a haunting persistency that finally became irritating.

To divert his mind, he switched on the electric lamp at his bedside, took a piece of note-paper from the writing-table and, bolstering himself up with the pillows, began to jot down in methodical fashion some questions and possible answers bearing upon the salient features in the mystery of Genevra Tressady's death. He found as he went on that the making of this tabulated list afforded him more distress than relief, for Jasmine's name figured there with unpleasant conspicuousness. Nevertheless, the young bank clerk in the course of his painstaking, daily grind in the service of Palford Brothers & Palford had acquired the habit, when once he had commenced a task, of plodding on to the end, regardless of personal inclinations. Consequently, the list was finally brought to completion. Inderwick read it over with a heavy heart. It ran as follows:

1. Did the fact that Miss Tressady had been found dying from the administration of poison in a room locked on the inside, and to which there was no

means of ingress or egress except a closely-barred skylight, admit the possibility of suicide?

Apparently not, since Dr. Hughes declared that the poison had been injected into her veins "in some mysterious and diabolical manner." Furthermore, the abrasions upon her fingers, showing that her rings had been violently wrenched off, proved that robbery was an element in her death, though probably not the main motive as her rings were not of great value.

2. Why had Jasmine suddenly become anxious that Miss Tressady's death should be considered suicide?

She had been content to call it murder until the macaw had cried out, "Nella! Elfinella!" Therefore she must wish to shield this Elfinella, and at the same time must regard her as an object of the gravest suspicion.

3. Why should Jasmine wish to shield a person whom she believed guilty of causing the death of her benefactress?

Unanswerable.

4. Who was Elfinella?

Without much doubt she was Helen or Nellie Martin, the missing seamstress, who had been in Genevra Tressady's study that afternoon from two o'clock until about quarter after three, and who, upon receiving Jasmine's telephone to the effect that Miss

Tressady was dead—and also probably that an investigation was being made as to the manner of her death—had at once gone into hiding. Her flight was conclusive evidence either that she was implicated in the murder or was in possession of damaging evidence against some other person who had induced her to run away in order to avoid being questioned.

5. In the event of either deduction being true, who was the person apparently responsible for her flight?

Jasmine, since it was she who had telephoned. Jasmine, personally, was above suspicion, but her conduct suggested that she was either shielding Helen Martin herself or some unknown person through her.

6. Was Arnold Tressady, too, either shielding Helen Martin or some one whom her testimony would incriminate?

Apparently, since he had tried to strangle the macaw who first mentioned her name, and then had vehemently refused to answer any questions concerning her.

7. Did Giovanni share his master's desire to shield Helen Martin?

Evidently, since he, too, had tried to strangle the macaw.

8. Why should Jasmine, Mr. Tressady and the Italian butler conspire to shield an obscure seam-

stress whom they believed guilty of killing a woman dear to all three?

Unanswerable. It was more likely that they were shielding some other person through the suppression of her testimony.

9. If Giovanni had, as he asserted, picked up Miss Tressady's sard ring from the floor after the door had been forced, how did it happen that he had so conveniently in his pocket a jeweler's box for the reception of the ring, and how had he been able to remove the cover of the box, place the ring inside, and then put on the cover again without attracting attention?

It seemed more likely that Giovanni had the ring in his possession *before* the door was forced—a significant fact—but, if so, how explain the sly, stooping movement he certainly had made upon entering the room? It could not have been for the purpose of picking up Miss T.'s other missing ring, the tourmaline which she sometimes wore, since Jasmine just before dinner had discovered this ring on the dresser in Miss T.'s chamber.

10. Could the disappearance of the play Miss Tressady was at work upon have any bearing upon her death?

It was possible. Jasmine was singularly reticent in regard to it.

11. Why was Jasmine unwilling to admit that Hil-

dreth Revelstoke was to produce this play, that he was Miss Tressady's suitor, and that he had called last evening?

Jasmine knew that Mr. Revelstoke and Miss Tressady had parted unpleasantly. Either she suspected him of being concerned in Miss Tressady's death or she did not wish to create a wrong impression of him in the minds of the coroner and detective.

12. But why should Jasmine be willing to let her benefactress' death go unpunished for the sake of shielding either Hildreth Revelstoke or Helen Martin—both of them comparative strangers to her?

Unanswerable.

13. Was there meaning to Miss Tressady's dying words "The tiger's eye!" or were they simply the delirium of dissolution?

Probably delirium. As Burton said: "The glitter of those yellow eyes would fuddle any one's brain."

Inderwick folded up this tabulation with a worried frown.

"Jasmine girl," he said half aloud, "it's a rum mess you've gotten into!"

He would not destroy the list for it might be useful later, but Inspector Burton must not happen upon it—Jasmine's name recurred too constantly—so he got out of bed and put the tabulation for safe keeping between the leaves of a memorandum in his vest pocket.

Then, because sleep was impossible for him as well as for Arnold Tressady, he put on the dressing-gown and slippers he found in the wardrobe and sat down by the open window for a reflective smoke. He was soon startled from his musings by the shrill ring of the telephone he had noticed in the hall just outside his door. Forgetting for the moment the lateness of the hour—it was well past midnight—and thinking it might be Mr. Palford, Senior, who had spoken of calling him, but had not yet done so, he hastened out to the insistently ringing telephone and took up the receiver.

To his amazement a woman's voice came sobbing over the wire.

“Oh, Mr. Tressady, I didn't know—I didn't know!”

Decidedly Inderwick had few of the attributes of a detective, for he answered in his straightforward fashion, “I'm sorry, but this is not Mr. Tressady. If you'll hold the line a moment——”

There was a terrified gasp at the other end of the wire. The sound served to quicken Inderwick's senses.

“Who is this speaking?”

There was no answer. But a sharp click told him that the connection had been cut.

The receiver was taken forcibly from Inderwick's hand.

“That call was for me, I think,” said a stern, authoritative voice.

Turning, Inderwick looked up into the austere face of Arnold Tressady, grey-hued in the dimly lighted hall.

“It was for you, sir, but the lady has rung off. I’m sorry; I shouldn’t have answered, but I thought it might be Mr. Palford, Senior,—he spoke of calling up——”

Arnold Tressady waived aside his apology. After satisfying himself that the connection had indeed been cut, he asked if there had been any message.

Inderwick repeated what he had heard.

Mr. Tressady scanned with deep-set, brooding eyes the open countenance of the young bank clerk.

“I don’t make much of this, Inderwick. In fact, it conveys precisely nothing to me. Did you gain any idea as to who this woman might be?”

Inderwick met squarely the older man’s challenging scrutiny.

“I rather fancied, sir, it might be Helen Martin.”

Did the grim set to Tressady’s features relax slightly? It seemed so to Inderwick.

“You may be right,” Arnold Tressady acquiesced, “although I do not understand why Helen Martin should telephone such words to me. Ah, Miss Holland, have we waked you with our talking?”

Inderwick noticed then that Jasmine, in some



loose robe that had obviously been hastily donned, white-faced, and with her dark curls in disorder as though she had tossed sleeplessly upon her pillow, was standing agitatedly in the doorway of her room.

"Who was it called, Mr. Tressady?" she asked, her eyes fever bright. "Was it—was it——?"

"No, no!" Arnold Tressady answered brusquely, and yet not unkindly. "It was not the message you were expecting. Now go to bed and *sleep*, Miss Holland. You look downright ill. There is nothing to worry about. You have my word for it."

"You are very—very magnanimous," she faltered gratefully. "I will try to sleep. Goodnight, Mr. Tressady."

"Goodnight," he responded briefly, his voice sounding curt and harsh as though to preclude any further emotionalism on the girl's part. Then, with heavy, deliberate step, he returned to his study and, closing the door firmly, shut himself in with his work and his thoughts.

"Jasmine, dear," said Inderwick wistfully, "is there anything I can do for you? I know something is worrying you, something more than grief."

"Dear Hal," she said pitifully, "I realize I must seem queer and unsatisfactory and—and not truthful, either—but—you still trust me, don't you?"

"I shall always trust you, Jasmine," he answered

simply. He took her in his arms and kissed her with a grave tenderness.

Then, because, in spite of the glowing love in his heart, he was, after all, just an inarticulate young Englishman, shy and awkward in the display of emotion, he released her abruptly, saying in a matter-of-fact tone, "Cut off to bed, Jas, and get some sleep. You *do* look shoddy."

But sleep was long in coming to Inderwick himself. He had new problems to trouble him now. Was it Helen Martin who had telephoned; what had her words meant, and what message was Jasmine and Arnold Tressady expecting? Above all, what was this bond of understanding that linked the hitherto joyous girl and this austere, self-contained man? Was it Elfinella—presumably Helen Martin—and, if so, why should an obscure little seamstress be of paramount interest to them both? Why, indeed? When, at dawn, Inderwick finally fell into the sleep of mental exhaustion, he was still asking himself why.

## CHAPTER VII

## "ONE OF US FOUR"

EARLY the next morning Inspector Burton appeared at Pomander Lodge and asked for Inderwick. It seemed that Mr. Palford, Senior, speaking for the firm, had called up Scotland Yard and informed the chief that in the elucidation of the shocking mystery surrounding the death of their late esteemed client, Miss Tressady, he would place unreservedly at his disposal the services of Mr. Harold P. Inderwick, a young man in whose honesty and discretion the firm had the utmost confidence. Since Mr. Inderwick was personally acquainted with the members of the household at Pomander Lodge, it was possible that he might be of some assistance.

Inderwick was prepared for Burton's visit, for he, an hour or so ago, had received the expected telephone from Mr. Palford. The latter, after learning from his young clerk the mystifying details of Genevra Tressady's death, had directed Inderwick in the name of the firm, to offer his services to Mr. Tressady and to the detectives in whatever capacity he might be useful. Furthermore, Inderwick was to take as many hours, or even days, from the banking house as he found necessary.

Burton appeared rather willing than otherwise to employ Inderwick's aid.

"Sometimes," he observed in a patronizing way, "a young fellow like you working on the outside and not known to be connected with the Yard can get closer to a suspect than even a clever, professional detective. But, of course, you'll have to be content to take orders from me."

"Of course," agreed Inderwick stiffly. "I know nothing whatever about detective work and, to be frank, it does not appeal to me. It seems too much like spying."

"That's a rum notion," declared Burton. "What better can a man do than bring a murderer to justice—no matter if he does have to spy about a bit? Now then, to begin with, I want to give Mr. Jocko another look over. I have an idea the old boy can tell us something more about Elfinella if we just give him the right cue. What did Timkins do with him?"

"He put him in the cage that Chapin bought at the bird fancier's and locked him up in a little unused room at the end of the second floor corridor."

"That's right," approved the detective. "I don't want Exhibit A tampered with and there are people, you know, who think Mr. Jocko is too much of a gossip." Burton laughed at his own humor.

Inderwick did not join in his laugh—before the callousness of the detective, he felt a growing distaste for the work thrust upon him. He led the way silently to the room in which the macaw was confined for safe keeping. To tell the truth, he dreaded whatever else the bird might be induced to repeat, for Jasmine Holland undoubtedly knew more of what Jocko's cry of "Elfinella!" meant than he felt she ought to know for her own good.

"I suppose," said Burton as they stood before the door of the little room, "that we shall have to force the lock, as Timkins and the key are not here. But it won't matter about the lock being broken. I am going to send Mr. Jocko immediately to Scotland Yard and have him kept there under observation until the inquest is held. The chief will find a way to develop his conversational powers. What the devil——?" He had grasped the door handle which yielded readily and the door swung open.

They stood on the threshold of a small, musty-smelling room, littered with odds and ends of furniture, packing-boxes and books stacked about the walls. The one window was closed and, as ascertained later, securely locked. On a dust-covered table stood a large bird-cage fashioned of stout, double-ply wire. At the bottom of the cage was huddled a quiet heap of scarlet feathers.

"I might have known they'd do for him," Burton

muttered between his teeth. He went up to the cage, thrust his fingers between the wire and, drawing out a small quantity of the bird seed which half filled the food dish near the dead macaw, examined it critically, separating from the seed some minute green particles fine as powder.

"Paris green," he said laconically. "Somebody was confoundedly anxious to shut Mr. Jocko's mouth. There is enough poison here to kill a dozen parrots. Do you know who put that bird seed in the cage, Mr. Inderwick?"

"Timkins did to make certain that no one tampered with the food. Then he locked the door and put the key in his pocket."

Burton scowled reflectively.

"Did you hear any one stirring around in the night? How about Mr. Tressady and the butler? They were both blooming eager to silence the parrot."

Inderwick replied that although he had stayed awake until nearly dawn he had heard no sound of any one moving about the house and that, as far as he knew, Mr. Tressady had spent the entire night writing in his study. Of Giovanni, he knew nothing whatever. Inderwick then told of the telephone intended for Arnold Tressady and which he had answered.

The detective was at once interested and alert.

“I’ll lay you a guinea the woman was Helen Martin. I’m going outside to trace this call—I don’t want to be overheard by any one here. I shall be back inside of an hour and, in the meantime, suppose you break the news of Mr. Jocko’s demise to the household and see which one of them looks or acts guilty. That’s the first thing you can do to help me.”

This task was extremely unwelcome to Inderwick but, in view of Mr. Palford’s wishes that he should render every possible aid to the investigation of Miss Tressady’s death, he did not see how he could refuse. Consequently, he returned to the breakfast room whence Burton had summoned him.

Arnold Tressady and Jasmine were just rising from the table. As Inderwick entered the room, Giovanni was drawing back the girl’s chair. The butler had not yet entirely recovered his poise. There was a tenseness about his features, and his dark, restless eyes which flashed interrogatively upon Inderwick, who came, as Giovanni knew, from an interview with Inspector Burton, had in them something of the expression of a trapped animal.

Without prelude, Inderwick, in his direct fashion, stated that he and Inspector Burton had gone to visit the macaw, and had found him poisoned in his cage, the door of the room in which he was confined having been forced. As Inderwick was speak-

ing, Weatherley came in from the kitchen to get instructions for the day from Jasmine, so he was able to observe the effect of his announcement upon her as well as upon the others. But her face showed only amazement and honest indignation.

"The poor birdie!" she burst forth. "And Miss Tressady set such store by him. I'd like to know the one that poisoned him." Her eye rested with indignant distrust upon Giovanni who had stooped suddenly to pick up the handkerchief which Jasmine in her astonishment had let fall.

The butler was singularly clumsy in restoring the handkerchief and twice let it slip from his fingers, being thus obliged to stoop a second and even a third time, so that it was a full minute before Inderwick could note his expression. By that time, the Italian's countenance might have been a mask for all the emotion it displayed.

Mr. Tressady received the news in apparent surprise.

"Poisoned, you say? And my sister was poisoned. Did Inspector Burton suggest that there was connection between the two—facts?"

"Well, yes, he did," admitted Inderwick, bluntly.

Jasmine drew in her breath with a little spasmodic gasp. It was evident that she was deeply affected by the statement that Jocko was dead. Inderwick



did not like to confess it even to himself, but he felt that she was distinctly relieved.

“May I inquire, Mr. Inderwick,” asked Arnold Tressady dryly, “what connection Inspector Burton is able to discern between my sister’s death and the macaw’s?”

Inderwick flushed.

“I don’t know just how much I ought to say, sir. You see, Inspector Burton has taken me into his confidence to a certain extent. He has asked me to help him—as far as I am able.”

“Asked you to help him, Hal!” Jasmine’s exclamation was one of dismay.

A kind of grim amusement gleamed in Arnold Tressady’s keen eyes.

“Trying to turn you into a second Sherlock Holmes, eh? I do not desire you to betray the Inspector’s confidence, Mr. Inderwick, but surely you can tell us what theory you yourself hold in regard to Jocko’s sudden decease.”

Inderwick’s flush deepened. He was not sure whether he was being laughed at or sounded for information.

“I don’t know that I have any actual theory,” he said constrainedly, “but it seems to me that Jocko’s cries had considerable meaning, and that some one in this household wished to have them silenced.”

Tressady’s eyes narrowed.

"You base your—shall we call it, conclusion, Mr. Inderwick—on my action yesterday afternoon in attempting to strangle the macaw when his cries desecrated the scene of my sister's death?"

The young bank clerk sustained the older man's hostile gaze.

"Yes, sir, I do base my conclusion partly on that action of yours."

Arnold Tressady uttered a short, contemptuous laugh.

"Why not say frankly, Mr. Inderwick, that you and Burton suspect me of having poisoned my sister's pet bird?"

But Inderwick refused to be goaded into anger.

"Because, sir," he answered in a quiet, respectful tone, "you are not the only person here who might be suspected of having done so."

Tressady's gaze, coldly satirical, turned now to the butler who was regarding Inderwick with unfriendly eyes.

"I fancy you have the honor, Giovanni, to share the suspicion which rests upon me."

The Italian's mouth tightened.

"Suspicion, without evidence, is nothing, signore."

Arnold Tressady, with a hard smile, turned again to Inderwick.

"Giovanni has spoken rather wisely. How about your evidence, Mr. Inderwick?"

Inderwick had been growing acutely uncomfortable under Jasmine’s reproachful glances. He felt his defenses slipping from him and becoming painfully conscious that he was practically insulting the man whose guest he was.

“I think, sir,” he said, “that I may not have expressed myself very clearly. As I understand it, Inspector Burton suspects some one of the four members of this household of having poisoned the macaw, but he does not suspect any definite person as yet.”

Tressady’s lips retained their hard smile.

“*One* of us four, eh? Not particularly myself, not particularly Giovanni; but some one of us four. Possibly Miss Holland, possibly even Weatherley. Quite a latitude for suspicion to fall on, Mr. Inderwick. I shall be curious to see how you make out with the evidence.”

Inderwick turned from the mocking, contemptuous eyes of his host to meet the anguished gaze of Jasmine Holland.

“‘One of us four!’” she was repeating with quivering lip. “Why can’t poor Jocko be forgotten, Hal? It’s—it’s a little absurd, isn’t it, to make such a stir over a dead bird?”

“Not when that bird’s cries are apparently a clue that may lead to the solution of a peculiarly cold-

blooded and revolting murder," he answered uncompromisingly.

Jasmine shivered and drew away from him.

"You are so hard, Hal!"

"I don't mean to be, Jasmine," he protested in genuine distress, "but surely you do not want Miss Tressady's death to go unpunished?"

She looked at him earnestly through unshed tears.

"I want the suspicion that Jocko's cries had any reference to Miss Tressady's death to be given up. The following of that clue, as you call it, will only bring wretchedness to innocent people."

"I am sorry, Jasmine," he replied unhappily, "but that clue will certainly be followed by the detectives, and I cannot refuse to do whatever they may ask of me. Mr. Palford, Senior, has given me time off for that purpose, and he expects me to make myself useful."

Arnold Tressady intervened with a quiet sarcasm that cut.

"We must not ask you to disappoint Mr. Palford, Senior, nor to deprive Inspector Burton of your services. If it is really necessary to hold a court of inquiry over a dead macaw, I can assure you that we, who form the little household here, will aid you as far as we can without actually incriminating ourselves—and if you succeed in finding conclusive evi-

---

dence against one of us, why, so much the more credit to you, Mr. Inderwick.”

“I trust,” said Inderwick earnestly, “that I shall not find evidence against any one here, for I believe that whoever poisoned Jocko has a more or less guilty knowledge of Miss Tressady’s death, and I should not want to think of such treachery being here in her own home.”

Jasmine brightened a bit.

“Of course, it would be unbelievable, Hal! You must see that it could not be one of us four.”

“I hope not,” he said gravely.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FOLLIES' THEATRE

BURTON returned within an hour as he had promised, his expression distinctly triumphant. Drawing Inderwick aside into the library, he told him that he had successfully traced the telephone call of the night before. It had come from Barclay's chemist shop in that section of London's theatrical district where cinema houses, music-halls and variety theatres spring up like mushrooms over night—in fact, from the immediate vicinity of the Follies' Theatre.

“And the Follies' Theatre,” finished Burton, “is where Mr. Lawrence Trent, whose visiting card I found on the floor of Miss Tressady's study, plays in the orchestra. Now this telephone call coming from Barclay's shop, together with other information reported to me this morning, not only proves that there is connection between this Trent and Helen Martin, but also that this woman is hiding somewhere in the neighborhood of the Follies' Theatre. And all this, combined with the evidence of the visiting card, shows pretty conclusively that Lawrence Trent *did* call on Miss Tressady yesterday afternoon, although Miss Holland denies it.”

"Since Miss Holland denies it," said Inderwick sharply, "either this Trent did not call here or she did not see him. I think it best for you to know, Inspector Burton, that I am engaged to marry Miss Holland."

The detective drew a prolonged whistle.

"Congratulations, I'm sure!" he said after a moment in a rather peculiar tone. "Now, is the fact of your engagement going to prevent you from doing unprejudiced work in this investigation?"

"There is no reason why it should." Inderwick spoke with a confidence which, if the truth were told, he was far from feeling.

"Perhaps not," assented Burton with a shrug. "However that is, the important factor in the case *at present* is Helen Martin or Elfinella, as she is called. Between us, Mr. Inderwick, you and I are going to honeycomb the Follies' Theatre district until we find her hiding-place. The first thing to do is to question Lawrence Trent. Then, before the day is over, I must see Hildreth Revelstoke and find out how he is taking Miss Tressady's death and if he knows anything about the missing play. Funny thing, that play, nobody wants even to talk about it. I would give a good deal to know what turned Miss Tressady to writing a fairy extravaganza when she has always before written emotional dramas. And why the deuce should Helen Martin steal it?"

"You don't know that she did," remarked Inderwick.

"Practically I do. It's a matter of putting two and two together. Both she and the play disappeared at about the same time."

"But I cannot see," demurred Inderwick, "what would be her object in stealing it. She could hardly hope to pass it off later as her own work, for Miss Holland, Lawrence Trent, and, no doubt, Mr. Revelstoke, too, were familiar with the manuscript. It seems more likely to me that if Trent really did call on Miss Tressady, as you believe, he was the one who took the play. I don't mean necessarily that he stole it. He was composing the music and might have wished to read over parts of the manuscript."

"Not a bad theory, after all, Mr. Inderwick," conceded Burton, but somewhat grudgingly. "Still, I don't believe much in theorizing. Follow the trail of the most likely suspect and put him or her through the third degree, if need be; that's my way, and I fancy I have been fairly successful. I shall be devilish sharp with this Lawrence Trent, and I wager it won't be long before we round up Miss Elfinella Martin."

Against his better judgment, Inderwick was beginning to feel vaguely sorry for the little seamstress—Burton was such a relentless police hound to have at one's heels. He said nothing of this, however, to the



detective as he accompanied him to the taxicab waiting outside.

As they were whirled Londonward, Burton asked what effect the news of Jocko's death had had upon the household at Pomander Lodge. Inderwick's concise account afforded him satisfaction.

"You can believe it or not, Mr. Inderwick, but your report of Jocko's death was no surprise to any one of those four. For some reason I have yet to find out, they have all combined to shield this Martin woman, and not one of them would balk at poisoning a parrot."

Inderwick stiffened.

"Miss Holland is incapable of such a mean and cruel act."

The detective laughed rather nastily.

"I forgot you were engaged to her."

"I will trouble you to remember that hereafter, Inspector Burton." Inderwick's tone was curt and cold.

Neither of the two men spoke again until the taxi drew up before the gilded front entrance of the Follies' Theatre.

Burton then broke the silence.

"Revelstoke's latest theatrical venture—a combination of variety and cinema house—has been immensely popular and a veritable gold mine for him. But I learned last night that he's planning to try

his luck in a change of policy—going to put on in a few weeks a musical comedy featuring some young actress he discovered in the provinces. He wants to spring this show on the theatrical world as a complete surprise and so he is keeping secret the name of his little star and even the author's name, but I understand that the girl is one of those who have been doing variety turns here off and on during the winter, and I have a shrewd suspicion that the author of this musical play is no less a person than Genevra Tressady, and that the missing manuscript constituted the vehicle that was to make Revelstoke's little provincial star famous."

Burton, upon alighting from the taxicab, went immediately through the marble vestibule of the theatre to the booking-office and, after a short conversation with the ticket-seller, motioned Inderwick to follow him through the nearest swing-door into the couloir.

"Luck is with us today," said the detective. "There is an orchestra rehearsal going on now and, of course, Trent as first violinist is taking part in it."

Inderwick was conscious of a sense of pulsing expectation as he followed Burton into the couloir, broad, lofty and richly carpeted. Although the vast lobby was but meagrely illumined with the straggling rays of daylight through the glass doors of the

entrances, Inderwick could see sufficiently well to know that the Follies' Theatre had been built and furnished regardless of expense. The walls, encrusted with polished marbles, shone palely in the dusk of the couloir, and he could make out pilasters, with heavily gilded capitals, flanking wide panels of looking-glass. Dimly, too, he could trace the ornate moulding of the ceiling, studded with crystal globes of pineapple shape.

Burton, scarcely glancing at the costly decorations, pressed on into the body of the house with that aggressive eagerness which characterized his every movement. In the auditorium the shadows were deep; row after row of vacant seats curved arc-like to the stage which, its curtain raised, showed wide, lofty and bare. Inderwick could just make out little winding staircases mounting upward at each side and "fly" galleries above hanging skeleton-like, in the gloom. From the regions behind the closely-packed scenery at the back and sides of the stage, blew a strong draft of air, laden with that indefinable odor which haunts the working part of every theatre—an odor compounded of gas, humanity, paint, canvas and carpentry.

In the orchestra pit, thin streaks of light gleamed at intervals from the music stands of the shadowy little group of men gathered there, and the unmelodious tuning of instruments echoed weirdly through

the huge, empty spaces of the auditorium. Burton advanced with alacrity toward the dim forms of the musicians, Inderwick, perforce, following. The fact that the director had just raised his baton as a signal for the rehearsal to begin, did not for a moment deter Burton. Having now reached the orchestra-rail, he, in a loud, authoritative tone that made itself heard above the commencing strains of music, asked to speak with Mr. Lawrence Trent. The orchestra ceased abruptly, and the director, turning in angry amazement, demanded to know who had presumed to interrupt his rehearsal.

Burton answered insistently that he was an emissary from Scotland Yard, that he had important business with Mr. Lawrence Trent, and must speak with him at once and in private.

The first violinist, a well-knit, dark-haired young man, his face showing oddly pale in the streak of light from the music-stand before him, rose agitatedly.

"There must be some mistake," he declared.

"Oh, I think not," said Burton unpleasantly. "Where can we go to be private?"

Lawrence Trent, murmuring a confused apology to the astounded and indignant director and, with a dazed, drawn look to his features, suggested the musicians' retiring-room under the stage. Burton agreed curtly and, vaulting over the brass rail into

the orchestra pit, motioned Inderwick to follow. The first violinist led them through a low doorway under the arc of the footlights, now blank and soulless, and down a short, steep flight of stairs. Turning an electric switch, he revealed a wide, low-ceilinged apartment, the air of which was stale with tobacco smoke. A dozen or more cane-bottomed chairs and a deal table comprised the sole furnishings of the room.

As the detective and Inderwick crossed the threshold, Trent closed the door sharply leading up to the orchestra pit and faced his visitors. The light, playing full upon the violinist, showed him to be a distinctly good-looking young man apparently about thirty years of age. He was of a type darker than most Englishmen, his hair and eyes being black and his complexion, though clear, yet of a decided olive hue. At first glance one might take him for a foreigner, but, though there was undoubtedly a Latin strain in his blood, his firm mouth and sturdy, well-knit frame suggested equally Anglo-Saxon lineage.

For the space of a minute, the detective and Trent glanced at each other, scrutinizingly and appraisingly. Although the violinist was indubitably under the influence of anxiety or fear, he did not lower his eyes under Burton's relentless gaze, but stared back with a directness that won Inderwick, at least, to his favor.

The muffled strains of the orchestra, coming now

to their ears, signified that the rehearsal was commencing again and also served as a reminder to Trent that his professional duties were being neglected.

“Will you kindly state your business with me?” he said, addressing Burton. “I must go back to the rehearsal.”

“Now don’t you be in a hurry, Mr. Lawrence Trent,” drawled the detective, in his most offensive manner. “I have a number of questions to ask you. First, I want to know at what hour yesterday afternoon you called on Genevra Tressady at Pomander Lodge.”

Trent was plainly appalled by the question and for a moment seemed unable to find speech.

At last he answered thickly, “I was not there any part of yesterday—have not been there since last Sunday evening.”

“Then,” said Burton harshly, “how did this”—he flashed Trent’s own visiting-card before his eyes—“happen to be found on the floor of Genevra Tressady’s study soon after her death?”

Trent’s words in reply were, Inderwick noted, precisely those of Jasmine Holland when asked the same question regarding that bit of pasteboard.

“I don’t know!”

“Oh, come now,” hectored Burton, “this won’t do, you know. You only lay yourself open to sus-

picion by denying that you called on Miss Tressady."

"I am speaking the truth!" Lawrence Trent's voice rang firm. "I have not been to Pomander Lodge since last Sunday evening, but I should like to know what you mean by interrupting me at rehearsal and cross-examining me in this fashion."

"I fancy, Mr. Lawrence Trent," said Burton with his most pronounced drawl, "that you are informed of the fact that Genevra Tressady was found late yesterday afternoon in her study dying of poison under most suspicious circumstances—circumstances that point strongly to murder."

"I know," responded Trent, his voice choked by emotion. "It was in all the evening papers—a horrible, ghastly tragedy. It's upset me terribly. Miss Tressady was a good friend to me, she was kind enough to believe that I had a future before me and invited me to compose the music for a new play of hers which she expected to have produced here in a few weeks."

"Titania's Flight, eh?"

Trent looked somewhat surprised at the question.

"Yes; that was the title."

"I'd like to have a look at the manuscript," said Burton. "You have it here or at your lodgings, eh?"

"I have my unfinished musical score at my lodg-

ings, but the manuscript itself, of course, is—was—in Miss Tressady's possession."

"By no means," said Burton trenchantly. "That manuscript, as I daresay you know, disappeared from Genevra Tressady's study at just about the time, I fancy, that you called there."

Lawrence Trent's dark eyes kindled.

"I repeat that I was not at Pomander Lodge yesterday afternoon."

Burton's smile was markedly unpleasant.

"You will have difficulty in making the coroner's jury believe that."

"The coroner's jury!" Trent stared at him aghast.

The detective drew from an inner pocket a folded document bearing an official seal.

"I am authorized to serve upon you this subpœna to appear before the coroner's jury at the public inquest into the death of Genevra Tressady."

Lawrence Trent reached out his hand mechanically to take the writ.

"My God!" he said dully.

Burton viewed him with uncompromising sternness.

"I have one other subpœna to serve, but the person—the woman—has gone into hiding. You know whom I mean, Trent, Helen Martin, Miss Tressady's seamstress. I'll trouble you for her address."



The violinist moistened his lips—he was deathly pale.

“Why should you suppose I know anything about Helen Martin?”

Burton’s unpleasant smile deepened.

“Because Helen Martin also visited Pomander Lodge shortly before Miss Tressady was found dying, presumably about the time you were there—for I still believe you called on Miss Tressady—and she has since been traced to the vicinity of this theatre. As a matter of fact, I have learned that she came to the stage door early last evening, asked for you, and was admitted to the green room. Are you willing to tell me now where I can find this woman?”

The detective’s bullying tone and manner whipped the hot Latin blood into Trent’s colorless cheeks.

“No!” he cried furiously, “you shall never find Helen Martin through any word of mine.”

Burton’s keen, hard eyes narrowed.

“Wonder if you will tell us, Trent, how she came by that queer nickname—Elfinella?”

“Elfinella!” Trent’s utterance was sharp. The blood receded from his cheeks as rapidly as it had come.

“Yes,” said Burton, “Elfinella. We, at the Yard, have succeeded in keeping that name out of the papers for reasons of our own, but Jocko, Miss Tressady’s parrot, sang it in my ears and the coroner’s,

and I don't mind telling *you*, Trent, that we have come to the conclusion that Jocko was echoing his mistress's dying cries—*reproachful* cries they were, too, Trent."

"It's—it's outrageous!" burst forth the violinist, his features seared with such anguish that Inderwick felt heartily sorry for him.

"Suspicious like that are worse than unjust—they are criminal. I will not have you hounding and harrying—Elfinella."

Burton came a step nearer.

"So you won't tell us where she is hiding?"

Lawrence Trent clenched his slim musician's hands.

"I will tell you nothing!"

## CHAPTER IX

### MR. HILDRETH REVELSTOKE

A HALF hour or so later, Inderwick and the detective called at the offices of Mr. Hildreth Revelstoke in the marble-fronted Twentieth Century Building which he had recently erected. A courteous attendant took their names in to the private office, and the two men, while waiting in the handsomely appointed reception room, occupied their time in scrutinizing the apartment and its furnishings, as though hoping thereby to glean some personal knowledge of the tastes and character of the millionaire clubman and theatrical magnate who had been Genevra Tressady's favored suitor.

The salient feature of the room was its air of almost homelike charm, and, were it not for the subdued click of typewriters coming from a door on the left, one might have fancied oneself in some secluded, private library. The interior decorator had skillfully combined artistic affect with the utmost degree of comfort and simplicity. The walls were panelled in soft greens, the furniture was of richly-carved brown oak and ebony, and bookcases of original design in the Renaissance style extended

around three sides of the room. The books, Inderwick noted, formed an invaluable collection of dramatic literature, comprising English and foreign plays, ancient and modern, together with miscellaneous works pertaining to the stage and its people.

While Inderwick was wondering if he might venture to take down one of these books, the bronze-fitted door on the right, through which the attendant had gone to Revelstoke's private office, opened, and the clerk, reappearing, announced that Mr. Revelstoke at present was engaged with his secretary, but if they would step into his study he would come to them there after a few minutes.

In the theatrical producer's private office, the same scheme of simple elegance and restful charm prevailed. The three doors leading from it, the chimney-piece, dado and other woodwork were of oak, fumigated to a rich tone and dead polished. The panelled walls were inlaid with embossed Cordovan leather, the large writing-table and easy chairs were also of oak, delicately carved, the latter upholstered with Levant morocco. The floor, stained and waxed, was covered in the centre with an Oriental carpet reaching on one side to the massive open fireplace which gave to the room its final touch of homelikeness.

This splendid fireplace, its broad hearth and sides lined with dark brown glazed tiles, the warm color

affording an effective setting for the grate and dogs of polished brass, and with its heavy mouldings of black marble, would have done credit to an old baronial house. But Inderwick's glance travelled rapidly over these architectural details, his attention being drawn and held by a large oil-painting of Genevra Tressady which hung above the carved mantel. The artist had depicted her in a draped, evening gown of soft blue satin, standing on a flight of stone steps gazing out over a stretch of misty parkland; and he had with remarkable success portrayed the noble beauty of her face and form, catching even the steadfast, kindly, yet sad light in her eyes which Inderwick remembered so well. From the painted canvas, her masses of fair hair shone forth like pale gold and the sheen of her finely-modelled neck and arms was that of ivory.

"A wonderful portrait, is it not?" asked a grave, mellow voice behind him.

Inderwick turned in some confusion. Hildreth Revelstoke had entered quietly from an inner room and now, with the calm and impersonal scrutiny of an art connoisseur, stood surveying the pictured face of the woman whose hand he had sought in marriage.

"It's a—it's a speaking likeness," Inderwick stammered, and rather awkwardly presented Inspector

Burton—an introduction which Revelstoke acknowledged with conventional courtesy.

As a matter of fact, Revelstoke's detached and even appraising manner of regarding the portrait of one whom he had professedly loved and of whose tragic death he must by now be aware, disconcerted the young bank clerk and at the same time made him indignant.

Burton, however, was not in the least nonplussed or moved by any emotion other than a keen desire to pierce Revelstoke's exterior of well-bred composure and sound the man's soul within. As a preliminary to the attack, he made a sharp, quick study of the gentleman before him. Hildreth Revelstoke was of a distinguished type, a man in the early forties, of tall, fine build and assured bearing, his plentiful brown hair untouched with grey, his eyes, large, clear and hazel, his mouth handsome, with soft sensitive lines.

Revelstoke sustained the detective's scrutiny with an air of polite tolerance, finally remarking, "I should be grateful, Inspector Burton, if you would kindly state at once the nature of your business with me. I am pressed for time—my secretary is waiting for further dictation on an important matter."

His continued cold-bloodedness in view of the sad knowledge he must hold, moved Inderwick to indignant speech.

“I cannot see, Mr. Revelstoke, how it is possible for you to have more important business than the investigation of Miss Tressady’s terrible death.”

For an instant Revelstoke’s poise was shattered. His handsome features contracted and the almost indistinguishably faint lines at the sides of his eyes suddenly deepened like scars. Quickly, however, he recovered self-control and presented an appearance of rigid calmness as he answered in a tone of quiet rebuke, “It is precisely because I *dare* not—if I would keep my reason—allow my mind to dwell on this cruel tragedy that I am forcing myself to concentrate on business transactions. I fancy you are aware that I had hoped to make Miss Tressady my wife.”

Inderwick was filled with contrition.

“I beg your pardon, sir. I have been very presumptuous and stupid.”

“You are young, Mr. Inderwick,” said Revelstoke in a kindlier voice. “You have yet to learn that all men do not display their grief like a mourning badge. Now, Inspector Burton, what questions have you to put to me? I will ask you to be as brief and direct as possible.”

Revelstoke’s courtliness of manner evidently created a favorable impression upon the detective, for the aggressiveness of his own demeanour was less pronounced as he said, “First of all, Mr. Revel-

stoke, when did you learn that Miss Tressady was dead?"

"Not until this morning when I came to these offices. My secretary then gave me Miss Holland's message. I had been at an estate of mine in Surrey since yesterday afternoon and did not return to the city until the nine o'clock train this morning."

"But are you not in the habit of reading the newspapers, Mr. Revelstoke?" Burton's utterance sharpened.

"Not when I have important matters on my mind. My secretary provides me with clippings of all essential news."

"I understand," said Burton, still with a slightly challenging note in his voice, "that you have made no attempt to communicate with the people at Pomander Lodge."

"You are mistaken there," rejoined Revelstoke with unruffled courtesy. "An hour or more before your card and Mr. Inderwick's were brought in to me, I finished dictating a note of condolence to Mr. Arnold Tressady and one of thanks to Miss Jasmine Holland for her message. These notes were sent by special messenger and may already have been delivered at Pomander Lodge."

Burton muttered something that sounded like an apology, and asked in a milder tone if Mr. Revelstoke was willing to give details of the interview be-



tween him and Genevra Tressady on the evening before her death.

The theatrical producer shook his head.

“What passed between us then is sacred.”

“But at the inquest you will undoubtedly be questioned about this interview,” the detective reminded him.

“If that is so,” responded Revelstoke with grave composure, “I shall be guided by whatever turn affairs have taken then. But, until matters have progressed further, I have nothing to say in regard to this last conversation I held with Miss Tressady.”

The detective, nevertheless, would not leave the subject altogether.

“After Miss Tressady’s refusal to see you the next morning—the morning of her death—what did you do then?”

Revelstoke’s expression became one of polite, but wearied tolerance.

“I returned to these offices, transacted some urgent, theatrical business, lunched at the Adelphi Club, and took the two o’clock train to Edgemere, in Surrey. The station-master at Edgemere, if you wish to verify my statements, will tell you that I arrived by the two o’clock train and left this morning by the nine o’clock.”

“I’ve no reason to doubt you, sir.” Revelstoke’s quiet civility continued to hold in check the detec-

tive's usual aggressiveness toward those he was questioning.

"Now you're a good judge of men I take it—have to be in your line of work—what do you make of Mr. Lawrence Trent, first violin at the Follies' Theatre?"

Revelstoke's answer was unequivocal.

"I consider Trent a hard working, ambitious, wholly admirable fellow with a future before him in the musical world. But I fail to understand why he should be of interest to an agent of Scotland Yard."

"Well," drawled Burton, with a hint of his customary bullying mien toward witnesses, "Scotland Yard isn't required to give reasons for its interest in people, but I'll say this—Trent was composing the music for Genevra Tressady's new play, 'Titania's Flight,' which has been missing since yesterday afternoon when he called on her in her study at Pomander Lodge—and that wasn't long, Mr. Revelstoke, before she was found in a dying condition."

Horror grew in Revelstoke's eyes, but he remained master of his emotions.

"You are doing Lawrence Trent a very great injustice if you suspect him of being guilty of even a comparatively small crime like the theft of the play which you say is missing."

"Now what are your grounds, Mr. Revelstoke, for speaking with such assurance?" demanded Burton.

There seemed to be some struggle going on in Revelstoke's mind. Once again those noticeable lines showed forth at the corners of his eyes, and his sensitive mouth hardened and grew almost ugly. Then, with a visible effort, he controlled himself, the marks of emotion passed from his face and he became once more the calm, courteous gentleman that Inderwick had always known him to be.

"I suppose I have no actual grounds for my assurance," he finally answered, "but I do have a strong personal liking for Trent and faith in him, too."

"That doesn't count for much," said the detective brusquely. "Some of our worst criminals have been devilish likeable chaps—chaps that inspired confidence, too. Now there's one more question, Mr. Revelstoke. Do you happen to know if Genevra Tressady had an enemy, or if there was any person who would especially benefit by her death?"

The question threatened to break down once more Revelstoke's barrier of polite composure, but he contrived to hold himself within bounds.

"I am afraid," he answered in a curious, repressed voice, "that there is more than one person to whom Miss Tressady's removal will seem a distinct benefit."

"Just what do you mean by that, Mr. Revelstoke?" harried Burton. "Who are these persons?"

Revelstoke's mouth again set hard and almost ugly.

"I cannot name them. But, philanthropic, sweet and lovely as the world knew Genevra Tressady to be, she still made enemies for herself—bitter enemies. I ought to know that, if any man does." His voice broke in spite of his self-control.

Inderwick heard this in amazement. Was Revelstoke insinuating that Genevra Tressady, Jasmine's friend and the friend, also, of many human derelicts, was not all that she had seemed to be? He would not—could not—believe it. Her kindly eyes, regarding him from the painted canvas above the mantel, made him ashamed of even a transient suspicion.

Revelstoke's gaze followed his.

"A wonderful portrait!" he said again. He spoke sorrowfully, and yet, as before, with a suggestion of the connoisseur's pride in a treasured work of art.

In some inexplicable fashion, the contemplation of that beautiful painting served to restore Revelstoke's poise, and the detective's battery of searching questions no longer had power to shake it. Courteously, but firmly, he impressed upon Burton the fact that he would make no further statements concerning Miss Tressady and her affairs until the day of the inquest, and not even then unless he should see fit.

Inderwick found himself liking Hildreth Revel-

stoke whom he had met hitherto only upon formal occasions. He was convinced now that Revelstoke, for all his composed and even, at times, indifferent manner, was suffering deeply, and he liked him the better for attempting to hide his grief from the ruthless police hound. Inderwick felt that imagination alone had led him to fancy that Revelstoke harbored some hidden bitterness against Genevra Tresady, for there was no hint of it now in tone or expression as he politely parried Burton's questions regarding her.

Revelstoke himself accompanied his visitors to the door of the outer office, expressing regret that he had not been able to be of more assistance to Scotland Yard.

Burton, somewhat baffled and perplexed, reluctantly followed Inderwick into the lift. As they shot downward with the floors flashing between the gilded iron grills, he remarked grudgingly, "Civil chap, at least—Revelstoke."

"He is more than that," defended Inderwick warmly. "He is a fine, courtly gentleman."

## CHAPTER X

### MR. REVELSTOKE'S SECRETARY

INDERWICK and the detective parted in front of the Twentieth Century Building. It was Burton's intention to return to the vicinity of the Follies' Theatre and continue his search for Helen Martin.

"I may ask you to help me later on, Inderwick," he said in rather a patronizing tone.

The young bank clerk stiffened. Burton's growing familiarity, combined with his aggressive manner and ruthless methods, grated upon him.

"If you need me," he responded coldly, "of course, I will do what I can to help you."

Inderwick ate a frugal lunch at a little French restaurant nearby and then took the tube to Hampstead station. When he reached Pomander Lodge, it was Jasmine, as on the day before, who admitted him into the quiet house.

The girl's eyes were reddened with weeping.

"We have just been up to see her—Weatherley and I. She looks beautiful now—as though she were sleeping. Mr. Tressady asked me to attend to all details. He is terribly broken up and the newspaper men have positively besieged us all the morn-

ing. Mr. Tressady refused to see any one or make any statement for the papers, but one journalist—he was young and offensively persistent—forced his way into the study where Mr. Tressady was writing, and—” she smiled faintly at the recollection—“Mr. Tressady threw him out bodily. I am sure he was not really injured, but he threatens to sue for assault and battery. Since then Mr. Tressady has kept his door locked, only opening it to take in the luncheon Weatherley brought up to him. He is writing, writing as though his life depended on it.”

“Perhaps his reason does,” suggested Inderwick, grown wiser since the interview with Hildreth Revelstoke. “Where was Giovanni when those newspaper chaps were pestering you?”

Jasmine sighed.

“He went to the city on some errand soon after you and Inspector Burton left. He has not returned yet. Mr. Tressady asked for him at noon and was greatly disturbed to learn that he had not come back. I don’t know what has delayed him.” The girl’s voice was troubled. “Oh, Hal, I’m so glad you are here. I have felt so alone and so anxious. You will stay, won’t you?”

“Just as long as you need me, Jasmine. But I think”—very earnestly—“that you would feel easier in your mind, dear, if you would be a little more frank—with me, at least.”

A distressed frown clouded Jasmine's forehead.

"Hal, if I could, I would be frank with you, but it is impossible—for many reasons."

"Is—Elfinella—one of these reasons?" he could not resist asking.

Jasmine put out her hands with a little gesture of entreaty.

"Don't—please don't—speak of—Elfinella! Hal, *can't* you forget that name?"

"I am afraid none of us can," he answered gravely. "Do you know, Jasmine, that Burton already has a clue to her hiding-place?"

Jasmine stared at him with dark, troubled eyes.

"What do you mean, Hal?" her voice odd and strained.

Inderwick looked at her with compassionate tenderness.

"You know, dear, that as soon as Burton learned that Elfinella—Helen Martin—had disappeared, he determined to find her. Well, he has succeeded in tracing her to a certain locality and he feels assured that in a very few hours he will find her actual hiding-place."

"To what locality has he traced her, Hal?" her voice still queer and unnatural.

Inderwick shook his head.

"I'm sorry, Jasmine, but I don't think I am at liberty to tell you that."



There came a flash of indignation into her eyes.

"You have more loyalty, then, toward Inspector Burton, than consideration for me?"

Inderwick appeared genuinely distressed.

"That is unjust of you to say. You are always my first consideration, Jasmine, the—the one big thing in my life." He spoke with honest, boyish fervor. "But Inspector Burton gave me that information in confidence and it would not be right for me to betray it, now would it?"

"I suppose not," she admitted reluctantly, "but, Hal, it is a cruel, cruel thing for him to hound and bully—Elfinella."

"Jasmine," Inderwick cried in dismay, "why does Helen Martin—this so-called Elfinella—matter so much to you?"

A strange, intangible silence fell. The girl's face was wan and anguished. After a minute or two she contrived to say, "I can only tell you, Hal, that if Elfinella is definitely dragged into this case, it will mean that we—you and I—cannot have that little home in the suburbs we have been planning and saving for. We cannot be married."

Inderwick stared at her in pained amazement.

"But why not, Jasmine? What has this Elfinella to do with us—with the happiness we are planning?"

"Hal," she said, speaking with an effort, "I am going to be a little more frank with you. I know

more of Miss Tressady's death than I wish to Heaven I did know."

A suspicion that was fairly a certainty stabbed him then.

"And Elfinella knows that you do?"

Jasmine swallowed hard.

"She knows a great deal. Don't look at me like that, Hal. You don't think I *killed* Miss Tressady, do you?"

Inderwick drew the girl toward him and gazed deep into her horror-filled eyes.

"I believe only what is good of you, Jasmine, and, no matter what happens, you are going to be my wife—remember that."

At this juncture the outer bell rang with a loud, insistent note, the sound echoing unpleasantly through the house of tragedy.

Jasmine hastily released herself.

"Please go to the door, Hal. Weatherley is still upstairs and I couldn't see any one now."

Upon Inderwick opening the door, he saw standing on the threshold, a tall, slender young woman neatly dressed in a dark blue tailor-made suit and small, brimless hat of piquant shape. She was distinctly pretty, with brown hair and brown eyes and clear, ivory complexion. In a quiet, well-bred voice she stated that she was Mr. Hildreth Revelstoke's secretary and that he had sent her there to ask if she

might go up to Miss Tressady's study in search of a memorandum of his which he had loaned to Miss Tressady and which contained the addresses of some important theatrical people.

Inderwick saw no reason for refusing Mr. Revelstoke's request, so, after consulting with Jasmine, he led the young woman upstairs and into Miss Tressady's study.

The secretary,—Miss Page was her name—evinced an eager and, it seemed to Inderwick, almost a morbid interest in the scene of yesterday's tragedy. Her eyes, brilliant and swift-darting, flashed in comprehensive survey about the windowless room. Inderwick was convinced that not the slightest detail from the barred skylight to the snarling tiger's head at their feet escaped her keen vision. She even crossed to the alcove and investigated the broken bird-cage behind the curtains. Then, ignoring Inderwick's expression of surprised rebuke, she came back to the tiger skin rug, gazing down intently at the ferocious head.

"Is it true, Mr. Inderwick, as the papers say, that Miss Tressady just before she died pointed to this rug and exclaimed, 'The tiger's eye'?"

"It is quite true," Inderwick replied stiffly, resenting her curiosity, "but are you not forgetting Mr. Revelstoke's memorandum?"

Miss Page appeared not to hear the question. She

stooped suddenly and ran searching fingers over the beady yellow eyes of the tiger and its snarling muzzle. Then, her curiosity satisfied, she rose, meeting Inderwick's reproving scrutiny with a daring little smile.

"You really must forgive me for seeming so inquisitive, but it isn't often one has the opportunity of visiting the scene of so mysterious a crime."

"I hope that I, at least, will never find it necessary to do so again," said Inderwick shortly.

"Yes, of course," she agreed sweetly, "but one can't help being interested and a bit curious; the newspaper accounts make one so. Now is it not strange, Mr. Inderwick, that any one should think it worth while to poison Miss Tressady's pet macaw? Had he been repeating things which he ought not to, as one journalist suggested?"

Inderwick felt now that the young woman's inquisitiveness had gone too far.

"Miss Page, I consider that I am not at liberty to answer questions of this nature. If you have really come for Mr. Revelstoke's memorandum——"

Miss Page threw him a reproachful glance in her turn.

"I hope you don't think I would tell an untruth! The memorandum should be, I think, in the drawer of the writing-table."

However, a careful search of the drawer and the

top of the table in addition revealed no memorandum. Miss Page, nevertheless, exhibited great interest in that block of paper with the pencilled notes which had also interested Inspector Burton.

Inderwick, indignant and even a little suspicious as well of this prying young woman, intimated clearly that since it was evident the memorandum was not in the study it was unnecessary to continue the search longer.

Miss Page, with a slightly apologetic smile, acquiesced in his decision and, after a final comprehensive glance that included every piece of furniture and other objects in the study, followed him into the corridor.

"I am so sorry to have taken up your time, Mr. Inderwick," she protested, "I am afraid I have been a shocking nuisance, but Mr. Revelstoke was most anxious to have his memorandum and he thought it was surely here."

Miss Page spoke penitently, but Inderwick fancied that he caught a transient gleam of humor—or was it mockery?—in her brown eyes, and he escorted her with scant ceremony down the stairs to the entrance hall. As he held open the door for her to pass out, Inspector Burton swung briskly up the steps.

Miss Page almost walked into the detective's arms.

“Oh, I beg your pardon!” she exclaimed with a little startled cry, but her eyes now were distinctly humorous.

Running lightly down the steps, she precipitated herself into a handsome grey motor car with limousine body that was drawn up at the curb. With a clang and a snarl the motor car shot forward, scattering the fine gravel under its wheels.

Burton stood staring after it, his face wearing an expression of astonishment and discomfiture combined.

“Well, I’ll be—damned!” he ejaculated.

## CHAPTER XI

### WHITE CHRYSANTHEMUMS

WHEN Burton had recovered equanimity, he plied Inderwick with questions regarding Miss Page.

Inderwick, after he had given a full account of the young woman's peculiar actions and prying interest, began to question in his turn.

"Do you know this Miss Page and do you think she is connected with the case in any way?"

"I have met her," answered the detective dryly, "and I haven't a doubt she is connected with the case. But I am going to call up Mr. Revelstoke and find out if she is really in his employ."

Burton went to the telephone. In a few minutes he came back, appearing both disgruntled and perplexed.

"Mr. Revelstoke denies all knowledge of her either under the name of Page or any other name. He says his secretary is a Miss Eliot and that she has not left his private office since she returned from lunch. I'd give a good deal to know in whose pay this—er—Miss Page actually is. But she doesn't intend for me to know. It's a devilish annoying thing to have her stepping in and complicating matters just as I

was seeing daylight in this case—the most promising mystery, too, that ever came my way. The solving of it will make any-one's reputation.”

Inderwick looked at the detective in surprise.

“Do you mean that Miss Page has been implicated in other crimes?”

“You might call it that,” said Burton sourly, and abruptly changed the subject. “Has that Italian butler chap come back?”

“Not yet.”

Inderwick's wonderment as to how the detective had become aware of the butler's absence was satisfied by Burton's next remark.

“While I was on the track of Miss Elfinella Martin, I came upon a double trail. Our friend, Giovanni, has a lair that he visits in the vicinity of the Follies' Theatre. I saw him sneaking out of Ragged Friars' Alley and trailed him to the stage door of the Follies' Theatre where he passed in as easily as though he belonged there. But an easy entrance wasn't my luck. I had to show my official badge to the doorkeeper—a damned thick-skulled old idiot—and put him through a third degree before he would tell me who Giovanni had asked for. Now who do you think it was, eh?”

Inderwick, looking into Burton's face expressive of hard satisfaction, answered as though he were stating a fact, “Lawrence Trent.”



“Exactly. Well, I went on into the green room, but the orchestra rehearsal was over and Trent had gone to lunch—nobody seemed to know where. Giovanni, in the meantime, had made a get-away through the front entrance. But I picked up one useful bit of information. Giovanni came to see Trent last night after the show, they talked awhile in the wings and then went out together. Trent looked as though he had had a shock. He asked the door-keeper to admit Giovanni without delay at any time. I demanded Trent’s address and was told that he lived somewhere in Ragged Friars’ Alley—the number was not known. I consulted a directory, but his name was not listed. Now that’s odd—and it’s devilish odd, too, that the butler at Pomander Lodge should have such urgent business with Trent, only a few hours after Miss Tressady was murdered, that he had to sneak away at midnight when every one here was sleeping, or trying to—and then back he goes again today. What do you make of it, Inderwick?”

“It looks on the surface,” said Inderwick slowly, for he had taken a liking to Lawrence Trent, “as though there was some collusion between the two men.”

“You’ve hit it!” declared Burton. “I’m going to look up this Italian fellow’s pedigree. There is something familiar about his face and I’ll wager he

has a criminal record. We know he's a potential thief, at least. He would have kept Miss Tressady's ring and said nothing about it if you hadn't accused him of picking it up from the floor. Think I'll go up to his room now and rummage around a bit. You can often get considerable information out of a chap's belongings."

Inderwick, however, although he said nothing to the detective, was still puzzled over Giovanni's possession of that sard ring. It was certainly peculiar that he should have had ready in his pocket a jeweler's box for the reception of this ring and that he had been able to remove the cover of the box, place the ring inside, and then put on the cover again without attracting attention.

Burton remained but a short time in the butler's room. He said nothing to Inderwick of any discoveries he had made there, but simply cautioned him to tell no one what he had already reported to him. The detective then left the Lodge, saying that he was returning to Ragged Friars' Alley.

"I've got the notion, Inderwick," he remarked with a confidential wink which the young bank clerk found himself resenting, "that we shall find Miss Elfinella Martin hiding somewhere in Ragged Friars' Alley, and I'm dashed if I think it would be a losing bet to wager that Lawrence Trent is stowing her

away and that to see her was partly the cause of friend Giovanni's little trip today."

Inderwick, too, thought this likely. He did not see Giovanni return, but when dinner—a silent and constrained meal—was served, the butler officiated as usual.

Giovanni appeared abstracted and nervous, his eyes holding always a disquieted, trapped look, and more than once his awkwardness and negligence drew upon him a sharp rebuke from Arnold Tressady which, however, only increased his inefficiency.

Inderwick, for his part, too, found Arnold Tressady an uncomfortable personality. He could not, try as he would, make himself feel at ease with his host—the latter was so aloof and self-contained, so unapproachable in his grief, and yet so plainly showing in the haggardness of his features the marks of tragic sorrow, that Inderwick despised himself for not daring to offer the sympathy he felt. He knew that under Mr. Tressady's austere and rigid calm, there surged repressed but smouldering fires that under provocation would flame forth, for he remembered how, in defense of Elfinella, those knotted, passionate veins had started out on his host's forehead and how it had plainly taken all his iron self-control to hold in leash his blaze of indignation against Inspector Burton for casting suspicion upon her. Inderwick could almost find it in his heart to

pity the murderer at the moment when Arnold Tressady should learn who it was that had slain his gifted sister.

When, to the evident relief of all, dinner was ended, Mr. Tressady returned immediately to his study, while Inderwick persuaded Jasmine to go out in the garden and get a breath of the cool, invigorating evening air. The soft, scented twilight of late June—of midsummer eve—lay gently over the shadowy garden—a place of tranquil witchery—which later would be illumined by the moon. Here and there above the beds of fragrant, old-fashioned flowers flashed the glow-worms' light.

"Miss Tressady loved this garden so," said Jasmine sorrowfully. "She used to come here almost every evening in the summer time and sit awhile on the seat under that laburnum there and just drink in the beauty of it all. Fairy lamps, she called the glow-worms. Oh, she was far more fancifully imaginative than one would guess from her plays—the plays that were produced."

"But the missing play, 'Titania's Flight' would have shown that fanciful phase of her nature, would it not, Jasmine?" Inderwick could not refrain from asking.

The girl drew sharply away.

"I don't want to discuss that play—I don't want ever to hear of it again!"

"I am sorry," said Inderwick contritely. "But you make such a mystery of it that one can't help wondering why."

"Police hounds can't, I suppose," she declared bitterly, "but I don't wish to place *you* in that category, Hal."

"I'll not give you cause to, Jasmine," Inderwick felt ashamed of himself. "It was shoddy of me to quiz you. Let us talk of something else. It's midsummer eve, eh?"

Jasmine breathed a little sigh of relief.

"Midsummer eve, Hal, when 'Every elf and fairy sprite hop as light as bird from briar.'"

The girl made a brave effort to appear like her bright, cheery self, but the attempt was a failure and she soon pleaded a headache and slipped away to her room.

With Jasmine gone, the garden lost its charm for Inderwick, and shortly after, he, too, went into the house. There he learned that Arnold Tressady, contrary to his usual custom, had ceased writing at this early hour of nine o'clock and had gone to his chamber to seek the sleep that he had rejected the night before. So Inderwick, finding himself alone, followed his host's example and also went up to bed.

Mentally wearied by his vigil of the night before and physically tired as well, he soon dozed off, but his sleep was restless and peopled with uneasy mem-

ories, apprehensions, and even weird phantasies in which the tiger skin rug and the unknown Elfinella figured prominently. Perhaps it was that queer, unreal name of hers, more suggestive of sprite than woman, or perhaps it was the knowledge that this was midsummer eve, when the fairy folk—according to old wives' tales—weave their magic spells, that conjured up the odd fancies that plagued him and made vivid long-forgotten goblin tales. So vivid were these dreams that he even imagined he heard snatches of elfin song, faint, elusive, and yet persistent. Why, he knew the words and melody—Ariel's roundelay from "The Tempest" that he had conned in his school-boy days. There it was rising again:

"Where the bee sucks, there suck I:  
In a cowslip's bell I lie;  
There I couch when owls do cry.  
On the bat's back I do fly  
After summer merrily.  
Merrily, merrily shall I live now  
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough."

But *was* it imagination, after all? The singing appeared to come from the garden below his window. Still half asleep, he sprang out of bed and ran over to the open casement.

The moon now was silvering the leaves of Miss Tressady's laburnum and tracing fantastic shadows over the garden spaces where its rays had not yet

reached. Against the sheen of the illumined places, tall shrubs and high-banked flowers stood forth, dark and mysterious, coverts, perhaps, for midsummer elves or prankish mortals, or worse. Inderwick shook his drowsy senses awake. What rot these moonshine fancies were! It must be the shock of the tragedy that had unhinged the matter-of-fact English poise of his mind, and put him in the receptive mental attitude of a child at his nurse's knee, eager to be thrilled by ghostly tales. There was no one, real or unreal, in that peaceful garden and the song he dreamed he had heard was pure imagination.

Angry with himself for having yielded to the absurd impulse that had drawn him to the window, he returned to bed and tried to sleep again. But this time sleep would not come. *Did* he hear faint sounds of stirring through the Lodge or was his imagination tricking him once more? Somewhere in the darkened house a chiming clock struck midnight. Of course, no one was up at this hour. Inderwick turned over on his side with the determination that he would sleep. But there came to his ear the indistinct, yet unmistakable, noise of a door cautiously closed. There followed next such a vague confusion of sounds that he was almost ready to believe that this was more moonshine madness, until out of that jumble of noises he finally distinguished

the soft padding of slippers and a smothered, yet hysterical, sobbing not unlike the whimpering of a terrified child. Then down the corridor a door was opened—very slowly, very gently—he was sure of that. Something, certainly, was wrong. Perhaps Jasmine was ill.

Springing out of bed and hastily throwing a dressing-gown over his pajamas, he opened his door and stepped into the hall. The corridor, flooded with moonlight, stretched empty before him. He hurried on to Jasmine's closed door, and listened intently. He could hear nothing.

"Jasmine," he called softly, "are you all right?"

There was no reply. The silence was complete as before.

"She must be asleep, after all," he thought, and decided not to awaken her.

However, he resolved that he would do a little quiet investigating and satisfy himself as to what that undefined stirring was which had so disturbed him. He stopped a moment before Arnold Tressady's locked chamber, curious to know if his host, too, had been aroused. But the sound of heavy breathing within proved to Inderwick that nothing had as yet roused Mr. Tressady from the deep slumber into which Mr. Tressady had fallen.

Weatherley's room was also closed, and Inderwick, listening outside, could hear her peaceful snoring.



He felt nonplussed. Everyone on this floor was asleep. Who, then, had crept sobbing down the corridor? And where had that person—woman or child he was certain—gone? How indeed had this vanished intruder come into the house in the first place? Could Giovanni, who slept somewhere downstairs, have admitted her, or could she have been concealed in the Lodge for some hours?

As his puzzled glance darted up and down the moonlit corridor, studying the closed doors leading from it, he uttered an astonished exclamation and started toward the room in which Miss Tressady's body lay. On the handle of the door hung a garland of white chrysanthemums, attached by a fanciful bow and streamers of white gauzy material. Inderwick stared in incredulous wonder. Those chrysanthemums, Miss Tressady's favorite flower as he remembered, had assuredly not been there when he had come up to bed. Who had put them there, and why secretly?

The sound of some small article falling drew his attention across the hall to Miss Tressady's study. That door which he had noticed was tightly shut when he came upstairs was now ajar. Without doubt, it was there he must search for the mysterious intruder.

Cautiously he opened the door and looked in. A wide shaft of the moon's radiance through the barred

skylight illumined the centre of the study, leaving only its outer edges in shadow. Straight down on the savage tiger's head beat that silvery brilliance, and the yellow lustre of the beast's eyes gave Inderwick again a peculiar, uncanny sensation.

"The tiger's eye!" he unconsciously repeated aloud.

There came a rustle and a little choking gasp from one of the dim corners of the room. Inderwick advanced toward an indistinct, little form that he could just make out blurred against the curtains of the alcove. The tiny figure eluded his grasp but, in its frantic flight to the door, was caught for one brief second in the moon's rays. ✓

Inderwick staggered back, dazed. Was this, in truth, some prankish sprite of midsummer eve? A dark cloak, slipping back, revealed an airy costume beneath, and the moonbeams shimmered on a white little face of ethereal loveliness, framed in by hair that scintillated oddly, forming a sort of eerie halo about the dainty head.

By the time Inderwick regained his mental balance, the flying little vision was flashing through the corridor and down the stairs at wind-speed. The soft pad of those desperately fleeing feet roused Inderwick to instant pursuit. This was no dream elf but some earthly creature with a guilty conscience, and he was determined to capture this night in-



"INDERWICK STAGGERED BACK, DAZED"



truder and force her to state the manner and the cause of her coming to Pomander Lodge. As he plunged over the stairs, the unreal little figure of the pursued reached the entrance door, tore it open, and disappeared into the garden.

Inderwick, unmindful of his bare feet, would have rushed after her, but some one came swiftly out from the dark recesses of the hall, slammed the door in his face and shot the heavy bolts into their sockets. In the light of a window above, he saw who it was that had checkmated him.

“Jasmine!” he cried in dismay.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE LAPIDARY SHOP IN RAGGED FRIARS' ALLEY

THE girl in a white dressing-gown, her hair falling over her shoulders in two long dark plaits, stood against the door, facing him, her arms outstretched to prevent his passing.

"Forgive me, Hal, but you must not—must not go out now!"

He made no attempt to do so, for the chug and purr of a motor car outside told him that further pursuit was useless. By this time the elfish little intruder was being whirled away into the covert of the night.

"Jasmine," he asked sternly, "who was that child?"

"I can't tell you, Hal, I can't!"

"Who sent her here?" he persisted, "and why did you let her in?"

"You don't know that I did," Jasmine evaded faintly.

"I am certain of it." He spoke with conviction. "That song in the garden—Ariel's roundelay—was a signal to which you responded. You admitted this child, the messenger of some person who knows more

than he or she should about Miss Tressady's death, and then you waited down here in the hall to make sure that she got out safely. What was she doing in Miss Tressady's study? Was she sent to destroy evidence?"

Jasmine flung out her hands with a little deprecating gesture.

"I don't *know* what she was doing in the study. She came to lay some white chrysanthemums on the bed beside Miss Tressady."

"Instead of doing so," said Inderwick shortly, "she tied them on the knob of the door and then went about some queer work in the study."

"Hal," begged Jasmine pitifully, "don't use that accusing tone. You promised to trust me."

"Oh, Jasmine," he answered with a choke in his voice, "I do trust you—and always shall—but I *don't* trust whoever has got you implicated in this crime."

The girl shivered.

"Implicated is an ugly word, Hal."

"I know it," he admitted, "but there is nothing else to describe it. I suppose she—that child—is Elfinella. It's a jolly suitable name for her."

Jasmine gave a little start.

"I thought Inspector Burton had an ingenious little theory that Elfinella was a nickname for—Helen Martin."

“He has not seen this child,” responded Inderwick sagely. “Now I am going to be fair and square with you, Jasmine. When I see Inspector Burton, I shall feel it my duty to tell him everything that has happened tonight—*everything* except that it was you who admitted the child. As regards that, he will have to suspect any one he pleases. I shall not help him out there. You are my—my world, Jas, and Burton and the whole of Scotland Yard can go hang before I’ll say anything that will throw a hint of suspicion on you.”

Jasmine suddenly put her arms about his neck and kissed him impulsively, warmly, as in the old glad days before the shadow of crime hung over her.

“Hal, you are a dear, dear boy. No one else would trust me as you are doing, but I’m not really as wicked as I seem.”

Inderwick wished that the coroner and Inspector Burton were as convinced of this as he was.

He had long to wait before he could impart to the detective an account of that night’s occurrences, for Burton did not return to Pomander Lodge until late on the following afternoon. He was greatly interested in the little midnight visitant and particularly in her personal appearance—about which he asked many searching questions.

“Should you say, Mr. Inderwick, that some one



had purposely dressed her up to look eerie and ghost-like?"

"Well, yes I should," Inderwick agreed. "Certainly, the sudden vision of her almost bowled me over for a moment."

"There's an arch-devil behind all this," declared Burton. "This case is no bungling murder committed on impulse, but a carefully-planned masterpiece of crime. Still there's always a loose link in every chain, and between you and me, Inderwick"—becoming confidential again—"that butler chap is the weak link here."

Burton then told how, as he came up the steps of the Lodge, he had seen Giovanni in cap and street clothes surreptitiously hurrying away through the garden. The detective added that he had reason to suspect that Giovanni was going again to London, either to Ragged Friars' Alley or to the Follies' Theatre. He himself would watch the stage door of the theatre and would be obliged if Inderwick would go to Ragged Friars' Alley and take up some post of observation near a small lapidary shop on the right-hand side of the diminutive thoroughfare, for he believed that this shop was the goal of the butler's secret journeys to London.

"Find out all you can about the people who run this place and their customers," cautioned Burton, "and remember there's a fat chance that you may

pick up some clue to the missing seamstress. Since you have told me about that eerie looking child, I am not as certain as I was that Helen Martin is Elfinella, but, whoever she may be, she must be found and made to testify at the inquest.”

So it was that Inderwick, sorely against his will, for the spying methods of detective work were diametrically opposed to the honest, straightforward grain of his nature, found himself within an hour entering the narrow mouth of the little *cul-de-sac* which rejoiced in the name of Ragged Friars' Alley. Here was a heterogeneous jumble of ancient plastered buildings, with gabled roofs and quaintly-projecting upper stories, buildings that once, no doubt, in more picturesque days, were private homes, but now served merely as cheap lodging-houses, and were jostled and darkened by ugly, modern shops of every description which had of recent years obtruded themselves into the lane. The court was cosmopolitan in the variety of trades and professions which it represented—greengrocer, tobacconist, barber, chemist, pawnbroker, dealer in curios and art souvenirs, bird fancier—all flaunted their attractions in friendly rivalry.

Ragged Friars' Alley was an offshoot of London's Italian Colony, as the names on the signs and the Latin features and dress of its denizens proclaimed. One sign, in particular, suspended above the arched

doorway of a tiny, two-storied shop the right-hand side of the court, held Inderwick's attention. With a sense of puzzlement he read the inscription set forth in worn gilt letters:

## LORENZO TRENTINI

### LAPIDARY, DEALER IN GEMS AND CURIOS

"Lorenzi Trentini!" He found himself repeating aloud. Where had he heard that name before—or one similar to it? This was, of course, the lapidary shop which Burton had sent him to investigate. But—"Lorenzo Trentini!" What gave that name so familiar a sound—like and yet unlike one that he knew well?

With a fine disregard for approved detective methods, he stopped deliberately in front of the little establishment and stared in through the single window, conspicuously clean. He saw a long, low-ceilinged room, its rear portion curtained off by hangings of faded tapestry, before which stood a polishing-wheel of ancient design, such as the lapidaries of bygone days used for giving lustre to the jewels they had cut. Curios of varied description were ranged about the walls—monstrous, bulging vases, mandarins, hideous Eastern gods, death masks, strange weapons, metal-work, ivories, armor, and, in a large glass case before the window, a display of

delicately-carved, semi-precious gems in odd settings. But, interesting though the contents of the shop might prove to a lover of antiques, it was upon the two occupants of the apartment that Inderwick concentrated his gaze.

Across a wooden counter at the left of the room, leaned a handsome girl of pronounced Neapolitan type, with masses of black hair, large soft eyes, dark as night, full red lips, and skin of a dusky olive hue. She was holding up a necklace of Venetian beads and apparently expatiating upon its merits to a prospective customer, a young woman in a blue tailored suit and smart toque hat.

With a start of surprise Inderwick recognized the would-be purchaser as Miss Page, Hildreth Revelstoke's self-styled secretary. What was *she* doing there? Was she actually buying, or had she come to this remote little shop through some deeper motive? He had been prejudiced against her when she had forced herself into Pomander Lodge, and he was still more so now at finding her in the very place Burton had sent him to watch. Hildreth Revelstoke had disavowed any knowledge of her, and the detective had admitted that he had met her before in the course of other criminal investigations. As a matter of fact, he had been no end upset upon beholding her at Pomander Lodge. No doubt he suspected that she was implicated in *this* crime also.

At that instant, Miss Page glanced toward the window and saw Inderwick staring in at her. She studied his face a moment and then, to his utter astonishment, bowed in recognition and smiled—distinctly smiled, rather mockingly, too, it seemed to him. Her boldness disconcerted as much as it amazed him. The young woman was brazen. He wished that Burton had come himself to Ragged Friars' Alley. Possibly he would have known how to deal with this unexpected situation. Frankly, Inderwick did not.

Suddenly it occurred to him that the detective would condemn the publicity of his present post of observation, so he crossed at once to the other side of the court where he pretended to examine some fruit of rather dubious condition. In a very few minutes he was glad that he had removed himself to a less conspicuous position, for soon he saw hastening down the alley on the right-hand side, the man he was watching for, Giovanni, the Italian butler. The fellow was in street clothes and wore a tweed cap pulled well over his features, but Inderwick knew him instantly and drew back into the shelter of the fruit dealer's doorway to avoid being recognized in his turn.

The butler slackened his pace upon reaching the lapidary shop and cast a furtive, but comprehensive, glance about. Inderwick had now stepped into the

fruit dealer's, and Giovanni, seeing only a couple of very dirty children playing in the gutter, and the usual denizens of the alley lounging in the portals of their little establishments, evidently felt satisfied that he was not being spied upon and quickly entered the lapidary shop.

At the same time Inderwick stepped into a telephone booth at the rear of the fruit store and called a number Burton had given him. He got the detective immediately, told him of Giovanni's arrival, and added the further information that Miss Page, so-called, was also in the lapidary shop. Inderwick heard an unmistakable "Damn!" vibrating over the wire and then the receiver at the other end of the line was slammed up.

It seemed an endless while to Inderwick, although really not more than ten minutes, before he saw Burton with two uniformed policemen at his heels, plunging down the alley. As Inderwick crossed the court to meet the detective, his eye was attracted to a curtained window jutting out above the lapidary's sign. Some one was hastily pulling down the shade. The action was so swift that he could not make out whether it was done by a man or a woman. It was a peculiar time of day—just before sundown—to lower a shade, but the little incident passed from Inderwick's mind as he caught the grim, ruthless expres-

sion on Burton's face and saw that the two policemen following him held their guns in readiness.

"There's going to be a good bit of a scrap on, Inderwick," said the detective brusquely. "We've got our barkers primed and our man trapped. If you're willing to risk cold lead or a knife in your body, come along with us."

He turned to the two policemen.

"There is no other entrance or exit to this place, so we can make a concerted attack. Our man will put up an ugly fight, but we've got him! Oh, I say, Inderwick," as the young bank clerk pressed after him to the door of the lapidary shop, "there was meaning, after all, to Miss Tressady's dying words, 'The tiger's eye!' and, by the Lord Harry," throwing wide the door, "we're going to stick 'The Tiger' now!"

## CHAPTER XIII

### “STICKING” THE TIGER

As Burton and his men plunged into the shop, Giovanni whirled around from the counter across which he had been talking with the soft-eyed Neapolitan girl. For the space of a second, motionless, he stared at the three armed men, then his hand stole swiftly to the breast of his coat, and he braved his hunters with the desperate fury of a trapped wild thing. Gone was his former cringing terror, what he had dreaded had come to him and he plainly intended to fight to the end. With back against the counter, his black eyes gleaming, and with a long, cruel knife flashing in his hand, he awaited a move on the part of his hunters.

The beautiful Neapolitan, uttering a strangled cry, snatched forth a dagger from the vivid sash at her waist and sprang to his side.

Firmly he pushed her back.

“*Via, via, Marianna! Keep out of this, carissima.*”

Burton was holding his revolver levelled on the butler's heart.

“Now then, Giovanni Nullo, alias Italian Joe, alias



The Tiger, drop that knife or I'll put a hole through you.”

The Italian bared his strong white teeth.

“You think so, signore?”

At this juncture Miss Page, who had been standing unnoticed among the Eastern idols and armored figures at the rear of the room, stepped quickly forward.

“I knew you would come, Inspector Burton!”

The detective started at the sound of her voice, ringing out clear and a little mocking. Giovanni, seeing his tension momentarily relax, with a panther-like movement leaped upon him.

Three revolvers barked simultaneously. There came a snarl of pain from the Italian, his right arm swung limply, and the knife fell clattering into the midst of the curios behind Burton. Then, through a cloud of smoke, Inderwick saw the detective and Giovanni go down together, rolling over and over on the floor, grappling for the possession of Burton's automatic.

The sound of the shots had roused the denizens of the alley, and, the two policemen, seeing that their chief was getting the mastery of the wounded “Tiger,” fought back the crowd of excited Italians that were pushing into the shop.

“*Che cosa?* What is the matter?” they were shouting. Apparently they were prepared to offer

help to one of their own race if needed, but the sight of two levelled revolvers held by a couple of stalwart, determined-looking British policemen kept them at bay.

Burton was atop now, the mouth of his pistol pressing Giovanni's temple, when the girl, Marianna, sprang toward them, her arm uplifted. A moment more and her dagger would have been buried in the detective's back, but Miss Page, too, sprang across the room and caught the girl's wrist. By the suddenness of her attack, she succeeded in wrestling the weapon from Marianna's fingers and flung it across the room.

"You will not help The Tiger by doing murder for him."

Marianna leaned weakly against the counter, breaking into uncontrollable weeping.

Miss Page quietly picked up the dagger and slipped it inside her coat.

Inderwick, meantime, had gone to Burton's aid.

"You'll find a pair of bracelets in my left-hand outer pocket," said the detective in his drawling, unemotional voice. "I'll be obliged if you will clap them on this devil. Hold still, Italian Joe, or I'll blow you into eternity!"

There was a brief struggle, but Giovanni, weakened by loss of blood and powerless with that smoking muzzle of steel pressing his forehead, was forced

“Inspector Burton, I want to ask your prisoner a question.”

The detective scowled.

“There’s no occasion for you to meddle in this. We’ve got the right man.”

“No doubt,” she assented sweetly. “You always get the right person, don’t you, Inspector Burton?”

His scowl deepened.

“If you’ve got a question to ask, fire away with it.”

“I wonder,” she said, still sweetly, “that the same question has not occurred to you. Italian Joe,” gazing steadily at the former butler as he stood manacled and supported by the two policemen, “what has become of Angela Dellarotti, the leader of your band, sometimes known as ‘The Angel’?”

Giovanni staggered slightly and his eyes held a tortured look.

“Angela Dellarotti!” he panted. “Why have you ask that? Who *are* you, signorina?”

“Perhaps your friend, Giovanni Nullo, if you will give me your confidence.”

He viewed her distrustfully.

“I give no confidence, signorina. I trust no one. For many years I know nothing of Angela Dellarotti.”

“I am sorry,” she said simply, and, to Inderwick’s bewildered senses—he did not in the least

understand Miss Page—she seemed to speak with sincerity. “It would be better for you if you were willing to tell what has become of her.”

“Now what the deuce,” began Burton angrily, “has Angela Dellarotti to do with this case? The woman disappeared ten years ago when the gang was broken up—vanished into thin air.”

“If I might presume to give advice to Scotland Yard,” smiled Miss Page, “I should suggest that the whereabouts of Angela Dellarotti be traced; otherwise I really fear, Inspector Burton, that Miss Tressady’s death will remain a mystery indefinitely.”

“Not while I know enough to follow the trail The Tiger has blazed for us,” answered Burton complacently. “He may be more communicative when he sees the inside of Bow Street Police Station. Take him out to the wagon, boys!”

The detective forced Marianna back as she clung to Giovanni. “No more of that sob stuff, my girl!”

“Giovanni, *mio*,” she called piteously, as they dragged him from the shop, “when you are release, remember I shall be waiting.”

Burton in business-like fashion drew from his vest-pocket a pencil and memorandum.

“Your name, my girl?”

She raised her eyes, swimming in tears.

“Marianna Trentini,” she answered with the soft, Neapolitan accent.

“Who is this Lorenzo Trentini whose name is on the sign outside?”

“He is my brother, signore.”

The detective’s pencil wrote rapidly.

“Where is your brother now?”

“I—I do not know, signore,” she faltered.

Burton looked searchingly into her beautiful mobile face.

“You’re lying, my girl. He is at the Follies’ Theatre—or will be soon. Isn’t that so?”

“It may be, signore,” she assented naïvely, but she appeared pitifully frightened. “My brother is verra fond of the theatre—the music, the dancing——”

Burton smiled grimly.

“You’re a deep one.” He turned to the door. “Are you coming, Inderwick, and you—*Miss Page?*”

Inderwick wondered at the peculiar intonation of his voice as he spoke the latter name.

Miss Page herself smiled mirthfully.

“I am going around to the Bow Street Police Station. May I have the pleasure of your escort, Inspector Burton, or do you prefer—the Follies’ Theatre?”

The detective swore under his breath.

“What’s the game, eh?”

Miss Page’s brown eyes sparkled with mischief.

"I can't tell you that until it's your move."

She stepped quickly to the door. On the threshold she turned and glanced back at Marianna staring after her with wide, terrified eyes.

Miss Page's expression softened.

"Courage, Marianna! Things may not be as black as they seem." With a little sympathetic nod she was gone, hastening up the alley in the wake of the motor van that was bearing Giovanni away.

"Inspector Burton," demanded Inderwick, "*who* is this Miss Page?"

The detective frowned.

"She is the most devilish, provoking and meddling skirt that ever was wished on a man."

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE UNKNOWN BENEFICIARY

As Inderwick emerged from the tube at Hampstead Station and started across the heath to Pomander Lodge, the low rumbles of thunder which he had heard upon leaving the lapidary shop developed into loud peals and warned him to hasten if he would reach cover before the storm broke. The wind had risen to a gale and the dusk of early evening had deepened into darkness so intense that were it not for the vivid and increasingly frequent flares of lightning, he could not have found the grassy path which wound away over bracken and gorse, through bushes and trees, to the garden gate of the Lodge. Now and then a big drop of rain would splash down upon his face as he hurried along, his thoughts with Jasmine and the other actors in that tragic drama which had opened with the death of Genevra Tressady.

Burton had gone to the Follies' Theatre to "grill" Lawrence Trent once more, so Inderwick understood, and to force him to admit that he was either identical with or, at least, closely associated with that Lorenzo Trentini whose name appeared above

the doorway of the lapidary shop in which The Tiger had been captured. Inderwick felt his brain in a whirl with the mystery and complexity of the case where so many identities were under question: Giovanni Nullo, the butler, proved to be a criminal, known to the police as Italian Joe, alias The Tiger; Lawrence Trent, the violinist, apparently living as two personalities, if Burton's surmises were correct; the child, Elfinella, entirely an enigma; and, finally, the meddlesome Miss Page whose connection with the tragedy he was far from being able to fathom. Burton did not treat her precisely as one would expect a detective to treat a criminal and yet he was plainly hostile toward her.

Not the least puzzling factor in the case was Jasmine's attitude of possessing secret knowledge of the affair and of shielding some person concerned. Why should she do this unless that person was very dear to her, dearer even than Miss Tressady who had given her a home and friendship when she was alone in the world and practically penniless? It was not like Jasmine to be ungrateful. *Whom* could she be shielding? He remembered how, when he had intimated Burton's suspicion that whoever had poisoned Jocko, the macaw, had been influenced to do so through guilty knowledge of Miss Tressady's death, Jasmine had protested the implication that "one of us four"—to use Arnold Tressady's phrase



—had been the person responsible. She was not shielding herself—Inderwick was certain of that—and he knew no reason why she should protect Giovanni even if she were ignorant of the fact that he was a criminal. It was absurd to suspect that there could be any need to shield either Arnold Tressady or the middle-aged, respectable Weatherley who had been devoted to her mistress. But Inderwick wished that phrase “one of us four” would not continue to ring through his brain.

The storm had broken now in its full fury, the thunder crashing ominously, the lightning so dazzling as to be almost blinding, and the rain descending in wildly-blowing sheets. Inderwick pulled his hat brim low, turned up his coat collar and ran on. At another time, he might have sought shelter under the beeches and evergreens that flanked the path, but now his one aim was to reach the Lodge where he knew Jasmine must be waiting, depressed and anxious.

Suddenly a brilliant flare of lightning showed up with distinctness a cloaked and hooded little figure running blindly toward him, buffeted by the wind and the rain. Like some strangely evoked spirit of the heath she flashed upon his vision and then was instantly lost in the engulfing darkness that followed.

Inderwick stood still and waited. He could hear

the sound of uncertain footsteps approaching him on the sodden path. Then came a flash of lightning more vivid than the preceding and the glare once more illumined the small cloaked figure. The hood had partially blown back and Inderwick caught a glimpse of a white, desperate little face and a pair of large, unnaturally bright eyes—wells of blue fire, they seemed.

“Elfinella!” he cried involuntarily.

With a swift, lithe movement, she eluded his arm outstretched to stop her and fled away over the heath, the rain, now descending in torrents, lashing and drenching the frail, flying little form.

Pursuit in such a storm was out of the question, so Inderwick watched till the darkness had blotted her from sight and then continued on to the Lodge.

Jasmine looked so worn and anxious that he said nothing of his encounter on the heath, nor did he mention the fact that Giovanni had been identified as a long-sought-for criminal and subsequently arrested on two charges, until later in the evening when Arnold Tressady demanded to know what had become of the butler.

“Poor Giovanni,” sighed Jasmine, when she had heard Inderwick’s account of his capture, “whatever he may be charged with, he had nothing to do with Miss Tressady’s death. It is perfectly true that he idolized her, is it not, Mr. Tressady?”

“It is impossible to judge what the fellow’s actual sentiments were toward my sister,” was the cold and guarded reply. “Certainly, he made an excellent servant.”

That closed the subject of Giovanni, and the household retired for the night, Arnold Tressady performing the butler’s accustomed duty of locking up the Lodge in such fashion that it resembled an impregnable fortress. Inderwick, watching, was convinced that if Giovanni had always been as particular as his master, no outsider had come in to poison Jocko.

The next day and night passed without incident and also, apparently, without further progress on the part of Scotland Yard.

On the afternoon of the following day, the funeral of Genevra Tressady was held. Arnold Tressady had insisted that the attendance at the services be strictly limited to friends and near acquaintances. But the prominence of Miss Tressady as a playwright, coupled with the violent manner of her death, had brought throngs of the morbid and sensation-seeking flocking about Pomander Lodge, and these people were restrained from forcing their way in only by a detail of armed policemen.

To Inderwick’s surprise and regret, Arnold Tressady had ordered that the casket be closed. The young bank clerk would have liked to see once more

the beautiful face of her who had been so good a friend to Jasmine.

The drawing-room where the funeral was held, was a conservatory of flowers—tributes from scores of friends and admirers. The most conspicuous floral offering of all was a magnificent set-piece of white chrysanthemums which lay on the lid of the casket and completely covered it. This costly wreath had arrived anonymously in the morning, but Inderwick was the only member of the small household who had commented upon or shown surprise at the absence of the donor's card. Inderwick then concluded that the chrysanthemums must have been sent by Hildreth Revelstoke, but when, shortly before noon, a floral piece came bearing Revelstoke's card, he changed his mind and his thoughts reverted to the bouquet of similar flowers which the supposed Elfinella had tied to the handle of Miss Tressady's door three nights ago.

He scanned eagerly the little group of mourners to see if there was anybody among them who resembled Elfinella; but there was no one in the least like her. Nevertheless, he was amazed to recognize Miss Page seated near the door at a vantage point which commanded a comprehensive view of the room and its occupants. How did she succeed in passing the police? Inderwick saw Burton, too, a few minutes before the services commenced, and

then the detective disappeared. Flowers had come from Lawrence Trent, but he himself was not present.

To Inderwick the attitude of Hildreth Revelstoke and Arnold Tressady toward one another was astonishing. Since Revelstoke was the one person whom Mr. Tressady received on terms of friendship, Inderwick naturally supposed that their common grief would unite them the more closely. On the contrary, there was an obvious breach between the two men. Their greeting of each other was cold, constrained, and brief. They sat, deliberately it seemed, at opposite ends of the room, and when the services were concluded and the mourners passed to the carriages, Revelstoke was assigned to the second carriage with Jasmine and Inderwick, while Arnold Tressady, stern and self-contained, rode alone in the first.

The Tressadys were apparently without near relatives, for no one claiming kinship had appeared, although a man who asserted that he had a right to attend the funeral had first sent his name in to Mr. Tressady and, upon being refused admittance, had then made a determined, but futile attempt to pass the policemen on guard. Inderwick wondered if this were the same individual who, when the funeral cortège started, stood on the edge of the sidewalk with bared head, his features convulsed

with emotion. He was a man probably in the late thirties, tall, wiry and rather good-looking with an earnest, ascetic type of countenance.

At the chapel of the cemetery, an extraordinary scene was enacted. Inspector Burton, accompanied by two other Scotland Yard detectives, and armed with an official document, halted the hearse at the portico of the little stone chapel and demanded that the casket be opened. Arnold Tressady vehemently resisted the order, declaring that to raise the sealed lid would be a desecration.

A lengthy discussion arose, during which the occupants of the carriages descended and gathered around the flower-covered casket which now rested on the marble floor of the chapel's colonnade and over which Arnold Tressady stood guard, with grimset face and fierce, unflinching eyes. Jasmine, weeping softly, clung to Inderwick's arm.

The upshot of the discussion was, of course, that Inspector Burton, by virtue of the official authorization he carried, won out and the casket was opened. Arnold Tressady turned sharply away as the detectives pressed around.

Miss Page, who had succeeded in securing a seat in one of the carriages, was among the first to bend over the casket. Inderwick felt thoroughly indignant at this intrusive curiosity and could not understand why Burton should fail to rebuke her nor why

his fellow-detectives should move aside so respectfully for her.

Hildreth Revelstoke, white and shaken, stood apart from the other mourners, leaning slightly against a pillar, his bearing, like Arnold Tressady's, repelling any attempt at sympathy.

"Hal," shivered Jasmine, "what do those detectives hope to discover?"

It was unanswerable. As the detectives, satisfied, finally drew back, Inderwick caught sight of the lovely, composed face of Genevra Tressady. Why indeed had Inspector Burton insisted upon creating such a desecrating scene over this peaceful sleeper?

Upon the return to Pomander Lodge, Miss Tressady's will was read by her solicitor, John Maitland of Lincoln's Inn. The document as a whole was something of a surprise both to Inderwick and to Jasmine. Genevra Tressady had amassed a large fortune through her playwriting, two-thirds of which she bequeathed to her brother Arnold, and the remainder, with the exception of annuities to Jasmine, Weatherley, Giovanni and even to Helen Martin, the missing seamstress, was left without restriction or explanation "to one Ralph Tredgold, resident in Melbourne, Australia."

Neither Inderwick nor Jasmine had ever heard this name before, and involuntarily they both glanced at Arnold Tressady to observe its effect

upon him. He sat in frowning silence, lost, it would seem, in bitter thoughts, and oblivious to the hard scrutiny which Burton, who was present, bent upon him.

The solicitor, having finished his reading of the will, was gathering up the papers preparatory to departing, when his clerk entered the room.

“If you please, sir,” he began apologetically, “there is a gentleman at the door asking to speak with Mr. Tressady on important business. He says his name is Tredgold——”

With a fierce, convulsive movement Arnold Tressady sprang to his feet, his eyes smouldering.

“You will tell Mr. Tredgold that I refuse to see him, and furthermore, that I forbid him to come here again.”



## CHAPTER XV

### ELFINELLA

THAT same evening about eight o'clock Inderwick and Burton were ushered into one of the stage boxes at the Follies' Theatre. The former had come sorely against his will—it seemed so callous a thing to do directly after attending a funeral—but the detective had assured him that his presence was necessary to aid in identifying a person who would be in the theatre that evening. Burton sat half concealed by the curtains of the box, but directed Inderwick to draw his chair close to the velvet rail so that he might have an uninterrupted view of the auditorium and stage.

The house was filling rapidly, but Inderwick scanned in vain that sea of faces stretching panorama-like before him. He could see no one whom he knew.

The interior of the Follies' Theatre, seen by the illumination of innumerable small crystal lustres, was a model of exquisite artistry. The decoration consisted entirely of delicate plaster modelled in the Italian Renaissance color-tones: white, pale yellow and gold. The back walls of the boxes and cor-

ridors were in two tones of Venetian red, while the stalls were covered with dark blue plush and the balcony seats with stamped velvet of the same hue. The stage curtain was of creamy satin, quilted, with a valance of Spanish embroidery, and harmonizing with the curtains of the boxes which were of pale yellowish silk, brocaded with gold flowers.

The musicians were filing up now into the orchestra well, and Inderwick studied curiously the dark-haired, dark-eyed first violinist who was the last to emerge from under the stage. Lawrence Trent looked thinner than he had three days ago, and his expression was worried, harassed almost, as, while tuning his violin, he glanced swiftly, but comprehensively, up to the boxes and balcony stalls curving above him. It would seem as though he were expecting to see some person there whose presence he dreaded. His gaze, growing more troubled, rested on Inderwick, and particularly on Burton, half-hidden behind the curtains of the box. There was recognition and apprehension in the strained black eyes of the first violinist, and when the director raised his baton for the overture to commence, Trent's hand that held the bow trembled. While the first liquid, yearning, long-drawn notes of the violins rose above the music of the other instruments, Lawrence Trent was guilty of a sharp, wailing discord. Under the lash of the director's scath-

ing frown, the first violinist mastered whatever emotions beset him, and the strains of his instrument melted into perfect cadence with the others.

Inderwick, looking down on Lawrence Trent's sleek, black head and noting again the darkness of his eyes and the swarthy complexion, felt that the Latin trace in his blood was more potent than the Anglo-Saxon, suggested by the sturdiness of his well-knit muscular frame. Burton's surmise that he might prove to be identical with Lorenzo Trentini, the Italian lapidary and curio dealer of Ragged Friars' Alley, did not seem so very wide of the mark. But why should he live as two personalities? Inderwick did not want to imagine any sinister motive behind this duality of identities for, at his single meeting with Trent, he had distinctly liked him and he considered him now, when studied under the glare of electric lights, a manly, dependable-looking sort of chap.

From the first violinist, Inderwick's glance travelled once more over the crowded auditorium, yet still not a familiar face did he see. He turned to Burton.

"Did you bring me here to watch Lawrence Trent?"

"No," said the detective briefly. "Wait a while longer. It will be worth it."

Inderwick noticed that the box directly opposite

remained unoccupied, although the curtain was already rising. Was it in this box some one he knew would sit?

The show, a clever, tuneful mingling of variety acts and cinema pictures played its sparkling way for over an hour, the performers being heralded by the flashing of their names on illuminated boards at the sides of the stage, in lieu of printed programmes. Suddenly, a triumphant exclamation from Burton directed Inderwick's attention to the hitherto unoccupied box opposite. The body of the house was in darkness, but the spotlight, shifted by a careless hand, beat for a moment upon the powerful, grizzled head and massive shoulders of a man who had just seated himself in the empty box, his chair drawn close to the velvet rail. Inderwick felt himself choking with indignation. The late comer was Arnold Tressady, fresh from his sister's burial!

Burton pushed closer to Inderwick.

"Arnold Tressady, I'm told, has been an almost nightly devotee of the Follies' Theatre for some weeks past. His sister's death interrupted his visits, but here he is back again in his old place. A rum chap, eh, Inderwick? An antiquarian scholar and historian with a passion for the frivolities of a variety show!"

Inderwick did not reply. His opinion of Arnold Tressady was beyond analysis.

The stage, now, as well as the auditorium was in darkness, the only light coming from the doorways of the exits. From behind the lowered curtain, sounded the bustle and noise of hurrying scene shifters. There was a subdued stir in the orchestra well, chairs put gently aside, footsteps softly receding. Then followed for a moment, a sudden, tense silence, broken only by a nervous little cough here and there among the spectators. Inderwick pulled his chair closer to the rail and leaned forward eagerly.

From the gloom of the musicians' pit, was rising now the low, clear, mystical wailing of a single violin. The electric sign-boards at the sides of the stage flashed on a name that glittered before Inderwick's incredulous eyes.

"Elfinella!" he read in letters of dazzling radiance.

The curtain rose slowly on a darkened woodland setting. At first the stage seemed empty but gradually as the scene lightened and a silvery brilliance like that from the moon's rays played over the forest, Inderwick made out a little, ethereal figure poised airily by the back-drop. Once more the arc of the footlights glowed, showing the orchestra pit vacant save for one man—the first violinist.

Lawrence Trent stood in the director's place and the bow flew like a live thing over the violin, calling in vibrant melody to the fairy-like creature in the

heart of the wood. An instant only she hesitated, and then, in response to a more insistent chord, haunting, passionate, impelling, she tripped lightly to the proscenium arch, kissed her dainty finger-tips to the expectant audience, and whirled away in a vivacious, madcap, prankish dance, her tiny, flying feet seeming rather to lead than to be guided by the winged bow of the first violinist. One might easily fancy that Elfinella in her short, tulle diaphanous frock, glistening with silver spangles, with wings of gauze at her back and a silver circlet on her floating hair, was Titania herself, queen of the fairies, dancing a saraband in some magic forest. Lawrence Trent, his eyes following every movement of the lithe, swirling, graceful form of the little dancer, was playing like a genius, all the ardor of his Latin blood pouring forth into the colorful strains he evoked.

The spotlight pursued Elfinella about the stage, and a mad, merry chase she gave it. But, at length, when the strains of the violin grew slower, fainter, and finally died away, the persistent circlet of light caught and held her, as, poised on one slippered toe, with sparkling eyes and lips gayly smiling, she stood once more under the proscenium arch, while long bursts of applause rolled up from the delighted house. The spotlight showed up with vividness the exquisite delicacy and perfection of Elfinella's face

and form. Hair like golden flame she had, deep, dark blue eyes, clear-cut features, and a sweet, appealing mouth. Though as small in stature as a child of twelve or thirteen, her figure was well-rounded and perfectly proportioned.

Burton gripped Inderwick's arm.

"Well?" he demanded.

"It is she," Inderwick answered, "the one who came to the Lodge at midnight and whom I met later on the heath. But I made a mistake in thinking her a child."

"You did," agreed the detective. "Elfinella is a devilish attractive and dangerous young woman. Look at Arnold Tressady—the poor beggar is dotty over her."

Tressady, indeed, oblivious to every one save the charming little dancer, was leaning over the rail of his box, applauding vociferously, his eyes devouring Elfinella.

An usher ran down the aisle and passed over the footlights a magnificent bouquet of white roses. The little dancer received them in her arms, bowing and smiling at Arnold Tressady. As she had not glanced at the donor's card, the tribute must have been expected.

Lawrence Trent, shouldering his violin for an encore, was again guilty of a note that was almost a discord. Elfinella flashed upon him a little smile,

half of rebuke, half of encouragement, and his bow quivered and danced over the strings in harmonious, but fantastic and elfin medley. And Elfinella, whirling, floating, pirouetting, light as mist, her filmy skirts billowing about her, began to sing in a low, clear, sweet voice, Ariel's roundelay from "The Tempest" as Inderwick had heard her sing at midnight in the garden at Pomander Lodge. As she danced, she drew roses from Tressady's bouquet and threw them, smiling, into the eager audience. One full-blown flower she tossed directly into Arnold Tressady's lap, and he caught it convulsively and held it to his lips. With another rose she audaciously pelted the earnest, impassioned face of the violinist, and then, kissing her finger-tips to the audience, with a flirt of her swirling skirts, she tripped prankishly from the stage.

As the curtain was rung down amid thunders of applause, Burton rose precipitately.

"Come around to the stage door, Inderwick. We're going to call on Miss Elfinella."



## CHAPTER XVI

### A BUTTERFLY IN THE NET

As Inderwick followed the detective up the narrow winding iron staircase at the right of the stage which led to Elfinella's dressing-room, he found himself feeling sorry for the little dancer. Burton would show her no mercy.

The detective halted at the first landing and rapped authoritatively on the numbered door. Brushing aside a middle-aged maid who answered his knock, Burton pushed into the dressing-room.

Inderwick, standing on the threshold, looked into a room, littered with theatrical luggage, bags, hat boxes, a couple of small trunks, photographs and stage costumes. The mirror above the dressing-table with its frame of incandescents gleamed like a mammoth diamond, and below it on the white cloth, stained with cosmetics, were jumbled rouge pots, jars of lotion and powder, lip sticks, variously colored pencils, powder-puffs, and bits of chamois. Seated before the glass, apparently in the act of removing the make-up from her face, was Elfinella, staring at the intruders with wide, startled blue eyes.

With the rapidity in dressing necessary to theatrical folk, she had already slipped out of her stage costume into a silk *négligée*, over which her hair, freed from the confining silver circlet, fell like rippling gold. The *négligée*, unfastened, revealed the fair, white skin of her neck and breast, and not even the make-up, vivid and inartistic at near view, could spoil her delicate, almost ethereal beauty.

“Who are you?” she was demanding of Burton in a tense, though musical voice, “and what do you mean by forcing yourself into my dressing-room?”

The detective, unmoved by her appealing loveliness, surveyed her grimly.

“I am Detective Inspector Burton of Scotland Yard and I have come to ask when you last saw Genevra Tressady alive.”

Elfinella quivered at the suddenness of this attack. Her hands clutched the edges of the dressing-table; under the garish make-up she was deathly white. With an effort she found utterance.

“I saw Miss Tressady last on Tuesday morning—the day before her death. We met by appointment in Mr. Hildreth Revelstoke’s offices in the Twentieth Century Building. Miss Tressady was writing a play in which Mr. Revelstoke was to star me and we wished to talk over the fourth act which she had not completed.”

“Tuesday morning was not the last time you saw

Miss Tressady alive," asserted Burton in a denunciatory tone.

"What—do you—mean?" Her words were almost inaudible.

Burton strode nearer the little figure huddled back in the chair.

"I mean just this. You were with Geneva Tressady in her study on the afternoon she was murdered. Lawrence Trent was there also. Before you two left the room, poison had been administered to Miss Tressady in some unknown and devilish fashion. She was in her death agony soon after she locked the door behind you, and her parrot heard her dying cries and echoed them. Do you know what those cries were, young woman? They were 'Nella, Elfinella!' and they were screamed out in bitter reproach."

The dancer with a moan of despair dropped her face in her hands.

Burton looked down relentlessly at the bowed, golden head.

"What did she mean by those cries?"

Elfinella did not reply. She was shaken by hard, choking sobs.

"Buck up!" ordered Burton roughly. "I am not accusing you of actually poisoning Miss Tressady, but you received Lawrence Trent into her study and you did not stop what he had come there to do."

Elfinella sprang to her feet, flinging back from her tortured face the bright masses of her hair.

"You are wrong, all wrong! Lawrence Trent was not at Pomander Lodge on Wednesday afternoon. It is true that I was there—in her study—alone with her—but Lawrence Trent was not there."

"That story sounds well," sneered Burton, "but it won't do."

"It *must* do," she cried, "for it is the truth!"

Inderwick was suddenly swept aside from the doorway. Lawrence Trent, his face darkly flushed, burst into the room.

"Nella, little Nell," his voice husky with emotion, "is this police hound"—darting a furious glance at the detective—"daring to bully you?"

Like a terrified child seeking protection, she went into the violinist's arms and clung to him sobbing.

"Oh, Lorry, can't you send away that awful man?"

Trent held the little dancer close, touching his lips to her shining hair.

"Don't be frightened, Nella dear. You've no occasion to be."

He turned angrily to Burton.

"If you don't get out of here, by George, I'll—I'll throw you out!"

The detective laughed unpleasantly.

"That wouldn't help your case, Lorenzo Trentini."

Elfinella uttered a little startled cry. The violinist's arms tightened about her, the flush had died from his cheeks, leaving them colorless.

"I supposed you would find that out and, of course, put some ugly construction upon it," he said in a strained, but calm, voice as though he was now nerved for the worst.

"No other construction is possible, Trent, or Trentini, whatever your real name is," answered Burton, with his most objectionable drawl. "When a chap with an alias denies a visit that we know he paid to a woman just before she was found dying of poison, and then has clandestine meetings with an escaped criminal who was a servant in this woman's house, and, in addition, conceals the whereabouts of a person who is an important witness in the case, Scotland Yard gets on the trail."

Elfinella suddenly raised her head and faced the detective, her terror for the moment vanished.

"Mr. Trent did not go to Pomander Lodge!" she reiterated, "and you cannot prove that he did."

"His visiting-card that was found on the floor proves it," snapped Burton.

Elfinella gave a high-pitched, hysterical laugh of derision.

"If that is all the proof you have, it amounts to

nothing. I had one of Mr. Trent's new cards in my bag that afternoon and must have dropped it there myself. The card was missing when I looked for it later at my flat."

The detective bestowed on her a hard, incredulous smile.

"It won't do," he said again.

Elfinella turned despairingly to Lawrence Trent, standing beside her, tense, but silent.

"Lorry," she begged, "why don't you tell Inspector Burton that I am speaking the truth? You were not at Pomander Lodge. Why don't you say so?"

The violinist caught her hand in a convulsive grip.

"Nella, don't say any more. He won't believe either of us and you are only making matters worse."

Through a mist of unshed tears, she studied his grave, swarthily-pale face.

"Lorry," she declared at length, "I know why you won't speak. But you must—you *shall*—for your own sake! If you do not, I will tell the whole truth—everything—and I don't care *what* they do to me!"

Lawrence Trent seized her by the shoulders; almost roughly his hand went over her mouth.

"For God's sake, Nella, don't be a little fool! If

you say another word, *I'll* do some talking. Inspector Burton will believe me then."

"You're a clever pair of actors," broke in the detective harshly. "Each of you nobly shielding the other, and both of you innocent, of course. Well, you can try that little tale on the coroner's jury at the inquest to-morrow."

Elfinella's sweet mouth trembled, her eyes grew desperate.

"The inquest!" she moaned. "Lorry, I can't go through with it!"

He drew her into his arms again.

"Little Nell," he said tenderly, "we are going through it together—and we are going to be brave, too."

She raised her beautiful eyes, filled with fear, to his.

"But, Lorry, I wasn't built for tragedy—but just for joy and the light things of life. A little trifler like me can't reach the heights."

He held her closer and kissed her quivering lips.

"At least, you can try, Nella dear."

At this juncture one of the stage hands called up the stairs that Mr. Tressady was waiting in the green room to take Elfinella home.

The little dancer slipped from Trent's arms.

"Do you mind, Lorry? He hasn't been here for several nights, you know."

“And it’s indecent of him to be here to-night!” the violinist burst forth hotly. “He hasn’t even proper respect for the dead. Oh, Nella, are you going to begin this all over again?”

“He gives me such beautiful flowers,” she faltered, “and it *is* nice, Lorry, to be taken home in a lovely motor car with electric lights and downy cushions.”

Lawrence Trent flung away the appealing little hand she held out to him.

“You were right, Nella. It is not for you to reach the heights.”

She drew back, hurt. Tears trembled on her long lashes and she stood regarding Trent piteously like a child that has been rebuffed. But her knitted brows and the stormy rise and fall of her white bosom showed that a woman’s struggle was being waged in her butterfly soul.

Lawrence Trent turned toward the door.

“You won’t need me now, Nella.”

His words and decisive movement settled her moral conflict.

“Lorry!” catching at his hand, “I don’t think I will ride in Mr. Tressady’s motor to-night, but”—with a wistful little smile—“it would be horribly lonely going home all by myself.”

“Nella!” A great joy shone in the violinist’s dark eyes. “If you’ll let me, I’ll call a taxi and we’ll go to that small restaurant we used to dine at,



where the coffee and the buttered crumpets are so good. We'll forget that nightmare of an inquest for a while and just—just look toward the heights, little Nell."

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE MISSING WITNESS

A HALF hour later Burton and Inderwick were ringing for admittance at the locked door of the lapidary shop in Ragged Friars' Alley. The show window was tightly shuttered for the night and the casements of the projecting upper story were dark and their shades drawn.

"The girl, Marianna, is there, at least," declared Burton, "for I have had the place watched since early morning and neither she nor any suspicious person has gone out. If we are not admitted soon we must force an entrance."

Inderwick placed his ear to the keyhole.

"I think some one is coming." There was no enthusiasm in his voice. He did not like this breaking in at night upon a terrified girl.

Burton glanced with satisfaction up the alley to where the dark bulk of the police motor was waiting.

"She'll probably put up a fight. I hope, Inderwick, you won't be squeamish at helping me to handle her. Women are the devil and all to arrest."

There was no time for further speech. The hurried, nervous footsteps which Inderwick had heard

faintly through the keyhole approached nearer, stopped, and there came the sound of a couple of bolts being shot back. The door was opened a crack and a woman's tremulous voice in soft, Neapolitan accents called out, "Is it you, Lorenzo?"

Burton forced the door wide open and the two men stared into the startled countenance of Marianna Trentini.

The girl had thrown a gaudy shawl over her night clothes and the candle she held in one shaking hand illumined the primitive colors of her wrap and the vivid red of the ribbon which bound the black masses of her tumbled hair. Her eyes grew wild and filled with terror at recognizing Burton, and she attempted to close the door in his face. But the detective was stronger than she and after a brief struggle he and Inderwick stood in the curio shop with the outer door bolted again to prevent Marianna's escape. The girl, barefooted on the uncarpeted, wooden floor, had set down the candle, had snatched a long, slender stiletto from a collection of daggers on the wall, and now her back against the counter, with weapon in readiness, much as Giovanni, her lover, had stood, she waited for Burton to approach her. The candle's guttering light flickered weirdly over the jumbled curios that crowded the shop and made the hideous features of Eastern gods start forth in shadowed ugliness.

“Drop that needle, you little tiger-cat!” the detective ordered roughly. “I don’t want anything of you. I have come to see the guest you are harboring here.”

“The guest!” Did an expression of relief flash over Marianna’s tense face? “It is then to find the sick lady you have come, signore? I hope you are a friend for she is verra sick. That is why I have take her in. She was fainting, signore, when she came here this noon, and she is not yet able to leave the couch.”

“So the sick lady came here only this noon?” quizzed Burton, his eyes upon the stiletto on which Marianna’s grip had relaxed.

“*Si*, signore, only this noon.”

“Then suppose you take us to her. We’re her friends right enough—we have even got a motor car waiting for her.”

“The signore is most thoughtful.” Marianna’s voice was odd.

With a hand that still trembled, she drew aside the curtains at the rear of the shop, disclosing a small alcove and a flight of stairs leading steeply up from it.

Burton made a sudden rush upon the Neapolitan, sharply twisted her right wrist and forced the stiletto from her fingers.

“Just to forestall any tricks on your part, my

girl," he said easily. He studied curiously for a moment the keen, slim dagger with its needle-like tip.

"Tidy little implement to do murder with, eh, Inderwick?" Then he carefully placed the weapon in an inner pocket.

At the head of the stairs a gas light was burning, making visible in the alcove a couch on which a woman covered with a white shawl was lying. Marianna pointed silently toward her guest. She scorned to address Burton now. As the detective advanced toward the couch, the sick woman sat up suddenly. Her illness seemed to have left her.

"Good-evening, Inspector Burton!" There was a distinct note of mockery in her voice.

Burton swore volubly.

The light from the gas-jet above shone on the soft brown hair, pale face, and mirthful brown eyes of the ubiquitous Miss Page.

"How the devil did you establish yourself here?" demanded Burton angrily.

"Precisely as Marianna told you," she smiled. "I came to purchase a very ancient Egyptian vase—a real art treasure, Inspector Burton—but I became ill—faint—and Marianna was kind enough to—er—'harbor' me, as you yourself expressed it."

Burton surveyed the young woman with a kind of grudging admiration.

"You're a rum one," he conceded.

Miss Page sprang off the couch, her mirthful smile deepening.

“Do you realize, Inspector Burton, that that is the nearest approach to a compliment you have ever paid me in the whole course of our acquaintance?”

Inderwick stepped forward determinedly.

“I think it is high time, Inspector Burton, that you tell me exactly who this—lady—is.”

Miss Page’s brown eyes danced.

“By all means, Inspector Burton, introduce me properly.”

The detective remained unresponsive to her railery.

“Well, Inderwick,” he said rather surlily, “this lady is Mercedes Quero, a private detective. She may tell you who engaged her on this case, but it’s more likely she won’t.”

“Right as always, Inspector Burton,” smiled Mercedes Quero. “I shall not tell—until I have to.”

Inderwick’s words of amazement at learning that Miss Page was the celebrated woman detective whose fame was known throughout England and even on the Continent, were cut short by Marianna’s indignant exclamations.

“You have play upon my sympathies, signorina, simply that you may spy, that you may ruin! You have no sickness. You are a *roba*—a baggage!”

Mercedes Quero's mocking smile vanished. Her eyes held a pitying light.

"I'm sorry, Marianna, but I had to do it."

The Neapolitan still viewed her with indignant reproach.

"I would not have take you in at all, signorina, but you had spoke kindly to Giovanni when they took him away, and that—that warmed my heart. But, even then you were just *delator e traditore*—spy and traitor!"

"Not entirely that, Marianna," responded the detective quietly. "If Giovanni had been willing to tell me all that he knew of Angela Dellarotti, I should have tried to help him."

Marianna swayed slightly.

"Angela Dellarotti is a name that Giovanni would forget now that he has reform."

"He will not be able to forget it," said Burton sharply, and started up the steep stairs.

Marianna uttered a cry of protest.

"Where would you go, signore? There are only sleeping-chambers above."

"You have another guest up there, my girl," Burton called back.

He had already reached the head of the stairs.

Marianna desperately ran up after him.

"It is but a friend, signore, poor and homeless, so verra unhappy, and so timid of strangers. She

has no other shelter but this little shop. Surely, signore, you would not drive her away?"

Burton pushed the girl back and hurried down a short, uncarpeted hall, past two open rooms to a closed door at the end of the corridor. He tried the knob; it would not yield.

"She is sleeping. Oh, signore, let her be!" implored Marianna. "She is so verra timid of strangers."

Mercedes Quero, who had followed in Burton's wake, drew the girl aside, and stooping, listened at the keyhole.

"There is no sound within," she said soberly.

Burton shook the knob.

"Helen Martin," he called harshly. "You are discovered. Open the door immediately, or we shall be obliged to break it down."

The silence in that locked room continued. Inderwick, mindful of another locked room and the tragedy it had held, found the persistent stillness ominous. Twice again in louder tones Burton called the name of the missing witness. Still there was no reply, no movement within.

Going back a step, Burton threw his whole weight against the door. It creaked painfully but resisted. Stopping only long enough to be sure that still no movement had taken place within, Burton once more hurled himself against the door. This time it



snapped from its hinges and the detective fell forward into a dark and stifling chamber.

Mercedes Quero, flashing on an electric torch, illumined with startling distinctness a woman's pallid face staring up from the tumbled clothes of a bed drawn up against the wall.

As Inderwick viewed that silent figure stretched in rigid repose beneath the disordered coverlet, and marked the glassiness of the half-opened eyes and the fixed look of agony on the pinched, but pretty, features, a feeling of sickly apprehension seized him. When did life ever look like that? Burton, with a muttered exclamation, watched Mercedes Quero as she stooped and raised with professional coolness the arm which lay over the edge of the coverlet.

"Well?" gruffly, "are we too late?"

Mercedes Quero did not reply. She let the arm fall back gently, and listened at the parted lips. Then, apparently not yet satisfied, she drew down the bedclothes and laid her hand upon the heart.

"Pulseless as stone," she announced gravely. "Inspector Burton, we are too late by several hours."

## CHAPTER XVIII

### MORE MYSTERY

WITH a scream of horror Marianna sprang to the bed, gazing with wide, incredulous eyes at the dead woman. Over and over she reiterated in her pretty, broken English that she knew nothing of Helen Martin's death; that she had carried up her supper between five and six o'clock, but that her guest had declined it on plea of a headache. Helen Martin had then locked her door with the request that she should not be disturbed again and Marianna had heard nothing further from her as she had spent the evening in the shop and had then gone directly to her own room.

"The signorina can vouch that I speak *la verità*—the truth," declared Marianna, indicating Mercedes Quero.

The latter nodded.

"It is quite true what she says, Inspector Burton. Helen Martin must have come to her death soon after the supper tray was taken down stairs for, at about seven o'clock while Marianna was busy with a customer, I stole upstairs and listened at this door.

There was no light and no sound in the room. I thought it strange at the time."

Her words, however, did not lessen Burton's distrust of the Italian girl whom he directed Inderwick to watch.

"A person who harbors and secretes an important witness in a murder case cannot be looked upon with leniency by the officers of the law," he said sternly.

Marianna attempted defiance.

"I do not know the laws of this country; I am here not quite two years. Till now, I have not learn that it is criminal to give shelter to a friend."

"Your friend or your brother's?" challenged Burton.

The girl drew the gaudy shawl tighter over her breast.

"My friend," she asserted bravely.

The detective gave a snort of disbelief and turned his attention to the quiet form on the tumbled bed.

She was a pathetic sight, this little dead seamstress, her delicate, pinched features pale and fixed, and her drab brown hair, streaked with grey on the right side, scattered in disorder over the pillows. But death had not robbed her of a certain faded prettiness; in fact, she seemed like one still young, but withered and broken by the vicissitudes of life.

"The wreck of a once attractive girl," mused Mer-

cedes Quero, studying Helen Martin's finger-tips, roughened by the needle-pricks of her trade.

"What do you make of this?" demanded Burton.  
"Suicide or another murder?"

Instead of replying, Mercedes Quero walked over to the old-fashioned bureau, lighted the lamp which stood upon it, and then took up and examined one by one the few articles upon the bureau. These consisted of a cheap manicure set, a brush and comb, a cracked hand mirror, and a small, rectangular pasteboard box open at one end. From the comb Miss Quero drew some long drab brown hairs and put them carefully away in the silver mesh bag she carried. Then she took up the box, ran her fingers inside it and pulled forth a quantity of paper shavings. Next she inspected the outside of the box. On it was printed in ink in bold, clear characters:

M  
3. 4: 123  
3. 4: ----- 34  
4. 1: ----- 84  
X

Mercedes Quero passed the box to Burton.

"What do *you* make of *this*?"

Burton read the queer legend with interest.

"Looks to me like a doctor's prescription."

Evidently Mercedes Quero did not accept Burton's snap judgment, for she took from her bag a

pencil and ivory pad and carefully copied the inscription. Then, her eyes very brilliant, her face slightly flushed, she went over to the bed, felt under the pillows, and separated the bedclothes, running her hand between the sheets almost to the foot-board.

Burton watched her curiously but maintained a disgruntled silence.

She met his frowning gaze with a little smile of triumph as she drew from the tangle of clothes, a small vial, unstoppered, empty, and bearing no label of any sort.

"I thought so!" she said softly.

She raised the vial to her nostrils, sniffing critically. A watery, violet-hued sediment tinged its sides and bottom.

Burton, his jealous resentment lost in official zeal, held out eager fingers for the bottle.

"Poison?" he demanded.

Mercedes Quero nodded.

"It must be. But it is not like any I have ever smelled before. Do you recognize the odor?"

"No," he admitted, after he had held the bottle to his nose, "but it's got a heady smell—must be devilish strong."

Mercedes Quero fitted the bottle into the little pasteboard box, replaced the paper shavings and

turned to Marianna who was leaning dizzily against the wall.

“This box was brought to the shop about four o’clock this afternoon while I was lying on the couch behind the curtains,” she asserted. “You carried it up to Miss Martin. I want you, Marianna, to describe the person who brought it and to tell what passed between you.”

The girl’s eyes were wide with terror. “I have never see him before—the man who brought it, signorina. He was tall, he wear dark glasses and he have a brown *mustacchi*. He wear a check suit and a—what you call a bowler hat. He say that he is a drug clerk and that he has brought the medicine for Mees Fleming—that is the name that the signorina has take. I think that she has order the medicine through my brother when he went away this morning for often he did errands for her. So I take up the medicine to the Signorina Martin, and that is all I know about it. I have not poison her—I swear it, signorina!”

“I am not accusing you of doing so, Marianna,” said Mercedes Quero soothingly.

While Burton was jotting down rapid entries in his memorandum, the woman detective examined two little books on a table at the foot of the bed. They were Shakespeare’s “Macbeth” and “Richard III” bound in red limp leather. Both copies were

worn and dog-eared, and some of the passages were faintly underlined in pencil. The imprint date, 1900, appeared to interest Miss Quero and she slipped the copy of "Macbeth" into her bag.

Next she opened the bureau drawers, taking up, piece by piece, the few neatly-mended articles of underwear that lay there, unmarked except for the indelible stamp of the steam-laundry. A pocket-book found in the top drawer contained only three pounds six. Evidently the little seamstress's resources were drawing to an ebb.

Both the straw suit-case and shabby travelling-bag by the side of the bureau were empty save for an old-fashioned cameo locket hidden in an inner pocket of the bag. The locket held a blurred and faded snapshot of a man and girl standing together on a beach. The faces were so shadowed and indistinct as to render identification practically impossible, but the small form of the girl, her head just reaching the shoulder of her tall, strongly-built companion lent the impression to the detective and to Inderwick as well, that they were gazing upon a picture of Helen Martin taken at some happier period of her life and treasured for the sake, no doubt, of the man who stood, loverlike, with his arm about her slim waist. Her flimsy dress, made in the style of some eighteen years ago, furthered the

impression that they were looking upon a portrait of Helen Martin in her girlhood days.

Mercedes Quero removed the picture from the locket and slipped this, too, into her bag.

A survey of the closet revealed a pitifully small showing of clothes upon the hooks: a long blue coat, by no means new, a well-worn serge skirt, a pretty, but cheap, summer silk, a couple of freshly-laundered white blouses, and a dark voile dress with slightly ruffled collar and cuffs as though recently worn and hastily hung up, completed the little seamstress's wardrobe.

As Inderwick viewed these humble personal belongings he felt an infinite pity for the poor, hunted thing on the bed. Some one, fearful of her testimony at to-morrow's inquest, had not been content with urging her into hiding, but had now stilled her voice forever.

A hideous memory suddenly assailed Inderwick. It was Jasmine who had informed Helen Martin of Miss Tressady's death—Jasmine who had sent her into flight. *He* knew that Jasmine's motives were of the best, but others would not, in fact, did not, think so.

"I've had enough of this," he said, a bit unsteadily. "I'm going back to the Lodge and rest up for the inquest."



## CHAPTER XIX

ANGELA DELLAROTTI

As Inderwick, next day, together with Jasmine entered the courtroom where the coroner's inquest was to be held, he found himself in a miserable and apprehensive frame of mind. He dreaded, as he had never dreaded any ordeal before, the moment when Jasmine should be called to the witness-box. The girl's white face and darkly-shadowed eyes evidenced the strain she was undergoing and increased his solicitude for her.

The coroner was already in his chair, and the jurors filing to their places, so Inderwick had time only for a hurried glance about the crowded court before the proceedings opened. To the left of the coroner in a small railed enclosure and guarded by a constable sat Giovanni, The Tiger, his wounded right arm supported in a sling, his face swarthily pale, his restless eyes half defiant, half fearful.

Across the aisle from Inderwick sat Elfinella, one small, gloved hand tightly clasped in that of Lawrence Trent who was seated beside her in rigid composure, his dark Italian eyes studying intently the faces of "the twelve good men and true" of the City

of London who were there to hear, to find out and to arrive at a conclusion as to how Genevra Tresady had come by her death. But, if the violinist was calm in his resignation as to what fate and these dozen men might have in store for him, Elfinella was far from being so.

She seemed more than ever like a poor little fluttering butterfly, caught in a relentless net and altogether powerless to free herself. Her blue eyes showed fever-bright under the golden fluff of hair straying from beneath the brim of her black lace hat, her sweet mouth was all aquiver and the faint flush of rouge upon her cheeks served mainly to accentuate the unnatural pallor of her face. As her frightenend glance met Jasmine's she tried to smile in greeting, but the attempt was a pitiful failure and brought tears of sympathy into Jasmine's eyes.

Again Inderwick wondered uneasily why the little dancer should matter so much to the girl he loved. Jasmine's whole connection with the tragedy that was shadowing their former happiness was a deplorable mystery and, as a straightforward, honest young Englishman, he hated and resented all mysteries.

On Trent's other side sat Marianna, a bright bit of color in the drab courtroom, with her black hair unhatted and bound by a vivid red snood, and her shoulders draped by a gay-hued silk scarf, its tints

somewhat at variance with the deeper red of her skirt. While the strain of Latin blood in her brother showed only as an admixture, she was avowedly and entirely Italian. She was looking intently at Giovanni and her expression was troubled and rebellious. Clearly, the arrest of her lover was a flaming grievance to her.

Arnold Tressady sat alone across the room on the right. It would seem that he had chosen his seat purposely, for its location afforded him an uninterrupted view of Elfinella at whom he was gazing with an intensity that frequently impelled her glance in return and apparently rendered her more acutely unhappy. Occasionally, Tressady's scrutiny would shift from the little dancer to Lawrence Trent, and then there would come into Tressady's eyes a smouldering fire. He appeared at that moment like a man capable of sweeping to destruction any barrier that stood between him and the charming object of his evident desire.

While Dr. Hughes was being sworn in as the first witness, Inderwick took advantage of the preliminaries to scan the throng of spectators at the rear of the court. Among them he distinguished Weatherley, her matronly bulk garbed in suitable black, and, farther on near one of the windows on the left, Hildreth Revelstoke, separated by the space of the room from Arnold Tressady, his former friend and

the brother of the woman he had sought to make his wife.

Why, Inderwick pondered as he had done many times since Miss Tressady's funeral, should the death of the woman dear to them both have created an impassable breach between the two men, unless——? Angry with himself, he checked the ugly suspicion. Both were men of irreproachable character and bound by strong ties of affection to the dead woman. How foolish he was to allow himself to mull over the fact that a tragedy, that presumably should have drawn them closer together, had instead made them as strangers to one another. He had no right to imagine that either possessed a more or less guilty knowledge that caused the other to distrust and shun him. The broken friendship had, of course, some simpler explanation.

The theatrical producer showed the strain he was under. There was a drawn and haggard look about his fine face and a diminution of that calm assurance of bearing which had always hitherto distinguished him.

A few seats beyond Revelstoke sat Mercedes Quero and Inspector Burton. As usual, the two detectives were in disagreement, disputing in earnest whispers and apparently comparing theories and bits of evidence. Their absorption rendered Inderwick more uneasy. He fancied that Jasmine, in whose

direction Burton glanced now and again, was the object of their colloquy.

Dr. Hughes' testimony was simply a recapitulation of his statement at the preliminary inquest. Geneva Tressady had not swallowed the poison which killed her; it had been injected into her veins, presumably into the veins of the right wrist, but by what means he was unable to state. The poison was unknown to him, but he suspected it to be some Eastern drug. He mentioned the abrasions on the second, third, and little fingers of the right hand, adducing it as his opinion that they had been caused by the jagged nails of her assassin as he wrenched the rings from her fingers.

The coroner consulted his notes.

"Mr. Arnold Tressady," he contended, "has deposed that his sister never wore more than two rings—an ancient sard on the third finger of her left hand, and frequently, but not always, a tourmaline upon the corresponding finger of the right hand. Now upon the day of the murder it appears that she wore no ring on her right hand since the tourmaline was found by Miss Jasmine Holland in a jewel-case in Miss Tressady's room soon after the post-mortem."

Dr. Hughes looked nettled.

"I am not here to pass judgment on detective evidence, but simply to give medical testimony to

the best of my ability. I can account for the lacerations on the fingers of Miss Tressady's right hand only upon the supposition that a ring or rings had been roughly, I may say, brutally wrenched off."

The coroner's physician succeeded Dr. Hughes in the witness-box and corroborated his colleague's testimony in the main, adding only a cautious statement that it was barely possible the poison had been injected through the abrasions under discussion, since the fingers of the right hand were swollen and empurpled as well as lacerated. He was not, however, prepared to venture an opinion as to the manner of injection.

"Could it have been done with the poisoned tip of a needle-like stiletto such as this?" The coroner suddenly flashed before the physician's eyes the keen, slim dagger which Inspector Burton had wrested from Marianna Trentini at the little lapidary shop on the preceding night.

The medical officer, although palpably unwilling to commit himself, finally conceded that such an instrument might have been employed.

An eminent toxicologist of international repute was summoned next and identified the poison of which Genevra Tressady had died as being an exceedingly powerful but little known East Indian drug, *Purpurus Somnus*, or the Purple Sleep, so called from the purple discoloration of the skin of

its victims, as well as from the purplish tinge of the drug itself when in liquid form. This poison is obtained from a small, violet-hued flower which grows only on the upper Himalayan slopes of northwest India, where its deadly potency has long been recognized and employed by the natives of the district.

In reply to a question from Coroner Purdy, the toxicologist declared that he had examined the internal organs of Helen Martin, the missing witness, and could state that she had died of this same *Purpureus Somnus*. In this case, the victim had drunk the death-dealing drug.

Asked if he could recall any other recent instance in which this poison had figured, the witness answered that he could recall none more recent than that of the murder of John Creidir, a wealthy philatelist, which occurred some ten and a half years ago and had undoubtedly been the work of that little band of swindlers and jewel-thieves whose leader was a beautiful Italian woman, Angela Dellarotti by name. As a matter of fact, the Purple Sleep had been that band's favorite means of disposing of inconvenient witnesses and obstacles in its path.

Inderwick found himself repeating half aloud, "Angela Dellarotti!"

That was the woman about whom Mercedes Quero had questioned Giovanni on the day of his arrest.

What sinister connection was there between these two recent deaths and those of the earlier victims of the *Purpurus Somnus*? Did the trail point to Giovanni alone or did it double back to the other members of that band whose leader, The Tiger declared, had, like himself, reformed?

A smartly-dressed, self-confident, young man—a clerk from Barclay's chemist shop in the vicinity of the Follies' Theatre—followed the toxicologist in the witness-box. His testimony, given in brisk, business-like manner, amounted to this: On the evening of June nineteenth—the day of Miss Tressady's murder—he had sold a quantity of Paris green to an Italian, who had stated that the poison was to be used to exterminate rats, and had signed in the apothecary's ledger for the Paris green, under the name of Giovanni Nullo.

“Do you see this man, Giovanni Nullo, in the courtroom?” the coroner asked.

Without hesitation the young drug-clerk pointed to The Tiger, seated now in an attitude of defiant resignation.

“That is the man, sir, who bought the Paris green.”

Inderwick heard Marianna across the aisle draw in her breath sharply, but Giovanni himself gave no outward indication of concern at the witness's



identification. Seemingly, he was now prepared for the worst.

The toxicologist was then recalled for a moment and testified that Genevra Tressady's pet macaw had been poisoned by a mixture of Paris green with his food.

Inderwick fully expected that Giovanni would now be summoned to the box, but instead, Detective Inspector Burton was called and stepped with aggressive alertness into the witness-box. He carried himself with the air of one having matters of import which he intended to disclose, and Inderwick liked, less than ever, the bull-dog set of his jaw.

However, to Inderwick's relief, the coroner confined his examination of Burton to questions concerning The Tiger and the suspicious actions on his part which had justified the arrest. Burton spared no incriminating details, dwelling especially upon the facts: first, of his being a notorious criminal; second, that a ring of Miss Tressady's had been found in his possession; and last, that the murdered woman's dying words, "The Tiger's eye!" must indubitably refer to him. The poisoning of the macaw, presumably in order to silence the talkative bird, Burton declared as the final link in the chain closing about the butler. Yet the detective made it clear that he regarded Giovanni as accomplice rather than principal; and, from his account of his follow-

ing Giovanni to the stage door of the Follies' Theatre where the Italian had gone to consult with Lawrence Trent and to the lapidary shop in Ragged Friars' Alley where the violinist engaged in a different profession under the alias of Lorenzo Trentini, it was not difficult to judge whom Burton regarded as principal.

The coroner now requested that the detective state what facts he had discovered concerning the criminal band to which Giovanni had belonged.

"It was a gang of international swindlers and jewel-thieves—murderers, too, when they got into a tight hole," Burton began readily. "The band was operating as early as thirty years ago under the leadership of a notorious Italian criminal named Luigi Dellarotti. There was no crime in the calendar this devil would balk at, but the police were never able to lay a finger on him. He was the master mind of the gang, planned all the coups, but left the dirty work to his underlings. Death by poison—the Purple Sleep—was his long suit when milder methods failed to get him what he wanted, and the Borgias had nothing on Luigi Dellarotti in ingenious ways of insinuating this poison into his victims. Associated with him as right hand man was a Neapolitan lapidary, and collector of curios, Giorgio Trentini, who had a shop in Ragged Friars' Alley."

Inderwick shot a startled glance at Lawrence

Trent. The young violinist's features contracted with sudden emotion and a dark flush suffused his olive skin. Elfinella, her eyes troubled and piteous, clasped his hand more tightly. Marianna straightened in her chair and flashed a glance of bitter hatred at the detective who was doing his utmost to incriminate the two men who were dear to her.

Burton met the eyes of the Neapolitan girl with unconcern and relentlessly continued his testimony.

"Trentini was an invaluable aid to Dellarotti and made receptacles for holding poison in pieces of jewelry, the handles of daggers and stiletos, and even in art curios. They say he boasted of being a descendant of the goldsmith of the Borgias and that he knew all trade secrets of that period. However, the police could never prove anything on Trentini, and he died, apparently of old age, in his shop, fifteen years ago. He left a son, Lorenzo, a mere lad who carried on the lapidary and curio business. The police could never prove anything against Lorenzo either, but, of course, he must have been in with the Dellarotti gang—'like father, like son.' Criminal blood was in him, he couldn't be expected to run straight."

The violinist squared his shoulders, and his dark eyes, fixing themselves on Burton, glowed with a hot contempt of the man who presumed to judge him so harshly. Marianna appeared to be choking

with indignation. Elfinella looked terrified and hopeless.

“Lorenzo Trentini,” Burton continued, “had a taste for fiddling as well as for his father’s pursuits and so he took lessons on the violin. Then he got to playing at restaurants and finally at picture palaces and music halls. In the meanwhile, he had changed his name and was known in the theatres as Lawrence Trent. In his leisure time he kept on with the lapidary work in Ragged Friars’ Alley under his real name. His half-sister, whom he brought out from Italy about three years ago, tended the shop for him after he became first violinist at the Follies’ Theatre—got the place, I understand, through—er—Genevra Tressady.”

The coroner at this point saw fit to interrupt.

“That will do for the present, Inspector Burton, as regards Trent or Trentini. Go back to your account of Dellarotti’s band.”

The detective seemed nettled at the interruption.

“It’s all part of the same story. However, Luigi Dellarotti grew old in crime and finally croaked sixteen years ago, bequeathing the leadership of the gang to his daughter, Angela, a handsome young woman of twenty-two or three. Old Dellarotti had been using her successfully for some years in his bigger deals. The girl was an excellent decoy with her gold-colored hair and her innocent-looking face;

in fact, she was known as The Angel on account of her appearance. But I'm bound to admit that after she became leader of the gang, although swindles and robberies went on as boldly as ever, the killings slowed up. I daresay she had a woman's squeamishness at murder.

"By this time, too, most of the older and principal members of the band had died off and The Angel formed a new corporation. She had for her right hand man a crook of international fame, an Englishman known to the police as X. Nobody could find out much about him, but he was supposed to be a gentleman gone wrong. It was generally believed that he was a university man who had taken honors in chemistry, and that it was he who distilled the Purple Sleep for the gang. When the police raided some premises that he was known to inhabit, they found a chemical laboratory there in full blast, and a dozen or more vials filled with this devilish *Purpurus Somnus*.

"They say Dellarotti came across X when he was a wild young student, saw possibilities in him and trained him for criminal purposes. X was always an interesting problem to the police, he was so bally elusive. Twenty times they'd surround places where he was known to be, but he would always get out somehow and they'd find nothing but a neat, gentlemanly little note signed 'X,' and stating that

he was sorry he didn't have time to wait for them. Once they so nearly got him that he couldn't even stop to gather up the black velvet mask that he was reported always to wear when he was on criminal business. They say he would not let the members of the gang—not even The Angel herself—see him without a mask. There was just one who was privileged to see his face, Madge Baylis, his girl, and he knew she would die rather than betray him. Madge was a little Cockney, the daughter of a tavern-keeper in Limehouse who often acted as fence for the gang, and she risked arrest a dozen times to save X from the police.

“Another important member of the band,” continued Burton, “was Giovanni Nullo, alias Italian Joe, alias The Tiger. But he seems to have been more of a tool than anything else. In fact, both he and Madge Baylis carried out the dirty work which The Angel and X planned.”

“We are to understand then,” interrupted the coroner, “that the principal members of this band of thieves and assassins were Angela Dellarotti, the man known as X, Giovanni Nullo, and the English girl, Madge Baylis?”

“Yes, sir,” agreed the detective, “and this gang stuck together and pulled off criminal deals till exactly ten years ago when it suddenly ceased all operations and apparently disbanded. The Angel

and X vanished into thin air—never left a trace—and up till now The Tiger, too, managed to keep hidden, but three months after the band broke up, the decomposed body of Madge Baylis was fished out of the river at Limehouse. It was supposed she drowned herself because X went off with Angela.”

This concluded Inspector Burton’s testimony.

Inderwick felt his mind in a whirl. He was not able clearly to connect this criminal band with the death of Genevra Tressady, and yet he was beginning to have suspicions, vague and terrible. Hang it all! He liked both the appearance and bearing of Lawrence Trent or Trentini. It did not necessarily follow that because his father was a criminal, *he*, too, must needs be one.

The summoning of Giovanni Nullo to the witness-box cut short Inderwick’s reflections. The Italian was distinctly cautious, admitting only what charges it was impossible to refute.

It was true he had once been a criminal, but he was now “reform,” had been “reform” for several years previous to his entering the service of the Signorina Tressady, two years ago. No, signore, she had not known of his past record, but had employed him without asking for references as she had done in the case of all others in her employ. No, signore, he had no knowledge, not even suspicion, as to the identity of the person responsible for the signorina’s

death. He had visited Lawrence Trent both at the lapidary shop and at the Follies' Theatre simply because Trent happened to be the brother of Signorina Marianna whom he desired to marry.

"There was the matter of the dowry to discuss, signore," Giovanni proffered ingenuously. "With the Italians, it is different than with the English. And I would say now, signore, that I have not known Signore Trent in the old days—he has not join with the band like his father."

"But how then," demanded the coroner, "did you come to know Trent's sister?"

Giovanni was ready with an answer.

"The Signorina Tressady has send me many times to the Follies' Theatre with messages to Signor Trent who was composing the music for the signorina's new play. It is at the theatre I have met Signorina Marianna who has come to hear her brother play."

The coroner abruptly shifted his questioning.

"At what time on the day of Miss Tressady's death, did Lawrence Trent call upon her at Pomander Lodge?"

"Signore Trent has not call at all that day. No one has call that day, only Signorina Martin, the seamstress, has come at two o'clock and I cannot say when she leave as I show to the door only those who



are visitors—not those who do work for the signorina.”

The coroner allowed this matter to drop, and turned his examination now to the poisoning of the macaw.

Here again, the Italian would admit only what had already been proven.

“*Si*, signore, it is true I have purchase the Paris green, but only for rats as I say to the chemist’s clerk. I have mislay the package and some one has find it and poison the poor Jocko.”

A faint smile played over the coroner’s face.

“It is always unwise to mislay poisons.”

“*Si*, signore, it is indeed unwise, it is deplorable,” Giovanni acquiesced.

The coroner leaned back in his chair, stroked his chin and contemplated the witness. Suddenly he straightened for a fresh attack.

“Giovanni Nullo, what has become of Angela Dellarotti?”

Inderwick’s puzzlement grew. It was the same question, he remembered, that Mercedes Quero had flung at Giovanni on the day of his arrest.

Before replying, the Italian shifted slightly the position of his bandaged arm. A gleam of apprehension dawned in his black eyes.

“Angela Dellarotti has reform, signore,” he finally

answered, "and so I cannot tell what has become of her."

"You mean you will not tell!" accused the coroner.

Beads of perspiration stood out on the Italian's forehead.

"I cannot tell, signore," he reiterated in a voice not entirely firm.

"Then I will tell you!" the coroner leaned across his table, fixing the witness with sternly-accusing eyes. "Angela Dellarotti," he thundered, "lies in Woodlawn Cemetery under a stone bearing the name of Geneva Tressady."

Giovanni caught at the rail for support. His eyes were those of a trapped thing.

"*Corpo di Bacco!*" he gasped.

The coroner peremptorily ordered Giovanni to step down from the witness-box.

"Mr. Arnold Tressady!" he called sharply.

## CHAPTER XX

### REVELATIONS

As Arnold Tressady with an air of cold aloofness faced the courtroom, it seemed to Inderwick that he had aged perceptibly in the last few days. His hair at the temples was almost white now, his piercing eyes dulled and somewhat sunken, the contour of his features sharper and harder, and even his powerful frame appeared to have shrunken.

After the witness had been duly sworn in, the coroner put a direct and startling question.

"How long have you been known by the name of Arnold Tressady?"

The witness squared his shoulders, his steel-grey eyes bit unflinchingly into the coroner's.

"Arnold Tressady is my legal name. Nine years ago I applied to the courts and received permission to assume that name. I had already been using it as a pseudonym in my literary work in order to avoid notoriety which has always been distasteful to me."

"Your name was originally what?"

"Albert Arnold Tregarthen."

"What was your purpose in legally changing it?"

"I had become so well-known by my pseudonym that I found it inconvenient for business purposes to possess two names, as it were. I decided that the pseudonym was the more useful of the two."

"Regardless of the notoriety?" There was a hint of sarcasm in the coroner's tone.

Tressady's brows drew together.

"I had become reconciled to the notoriety. A writer cannot escape it."

"You had no other cause for changing your name?"

"None." Tressady's voice was curt and harsh.

"No reason," urged the coroner, "connected with the woman, Angela Dellarotti, known for the past nine years as Genevra Tressady?"

The face of the witness set in grimmer lines.

"The reason was as I have stated."

The coroner bent forward to the attack.

"Why did you allow Angela Dellarotti to be known as your sister?"

"For reasons of my own, I thought it best."

"What were your actual relations with this woman?"

"Entirely formal, we lived at Pomander Lodge as strangers—mere acquaintances."

"But prior to your living there, in what relation did she stand to you?"

Arnold Tressady gazed above and beyond the avid spectators.

"She was my mistress," he answered, in cold, deliberate tones.

"That is a lie!" cried out a stern voice, vibrant with indignation.

Inderwick, turning sharply, saw that a tall, wiry, youngish-looking man had sprung to his feet from the second row of benches reserved for witnesses. His sun-bronzed, rather ascetic, countenance was convulsed with what seemed righteous anger.

For a tense moment he and Arnold Tressady over the heads of the eagerly whispering spectators held each other's glance with consuming hostility. Then the coroner rapped loudly for order and a couple of scandalized ushers forced the interrupter to resume his seat.

Inderwick, not altogether to his surprise, recognized the man as the one who, when the funeral cortège of Geneva Tressady had started for the cemetery, had stood on the edge of the sidewalk with bared head, his features working with emotion. Could he by any chance be that unknown beneficiary, Ralph Tredgold of Melbourne, Australia, to whom the dead woman had bequeathed a third of her fortune, and whom Tressady had refused to see at the conclusion of the reading of the will?

Order being restored, the coroner turned to the

witness whose demeanor was now marked by an air of unmistakable contempt.

“You still assert that the woman known as Genevra Tressady did not stand in legal relationship to you—that she was not in fact your wife?”

“I have stated what she was to me.”

With this, Arnold Tressady was dismissed, and the name of Ralph Tredgold was rapped out by the coroner.

Inderwick had been correct in his surmise. The man who had given the lie to Tressady was indeed the unknown Australian beneficiary.

Ralph Tredgold took the oath in an earnest, serious fashion that commended itself to Inderwick and seemed also to create a favorable impression upon coroner and jury. He gave his age as thirty-five and his occupation as gentleman farmer, with banking interests and a town residence in Melbourne.

“In what relationship did you, Mr. Tredgold, stand to the late Angela Dellarotti?” the coroner asked.

Mr. Tredgold’s answer caused a wave of astonishment through the courtroom.

“I was her half-brother, the son of her mother by a second husband.”

Directed by the coroner to give a detailed family history, Tredgold went on to state that his and Angela’s mother had been an Englishwoman, and

that she had, when a girl of eighteen, contracted a runaway marriage with a self-styled Italian nobleman some fifteen years her senior, against whom her guardian had repeatedly warned his orphaned and wealthy young ward. After a few months of married life, during which the young bride suffered neglect and abuse at the hands of her Italian husband, she learned that the man she had married was no other than the notorious criminal, Luigi Dellarotti. She fled from him in horror and returned to her guardian's house where Angela was born.

Within a year the young wife had secured a divorce and had been awarded the custody of the child. Several months later she married her guardian, Gilbert Tredgold, by whom she became the mother of Ralph, the present witness. The years passed happily and Mrs. Tredgold believed herself secure from the malignancy of Luigi Dellarotti who had, at the time of her divorce, written her an abusive letter threatening revenge.

Angela, a golden-haired, sweet-natured child, was the idol of her mother's heart and very dear also to her step-father who had legally adopted her in order that she should not bear the name of Dellarotti. Angela Genevra Tredgold had been her legal name since the day of her mother's second marriage.

When Angela was seven years old and little Ralph Tredgold but four, Luigi Dellarotti perpetrated a

fiendish revenge on the woman who had divorced herself and her fortune from him. He forced entrance into Tredgold Hall one night, chloroformed Angela and carried her away while the household slept. On the next day the distracted mother received a letter from Dellarotti in which he declared his intention of training the child to be a criminal.

“Before I am done with her,” he wrote in conclusion, “she shall become so steeped in crime that you, her own mother, will feel ashamed to call her Daughter.”

Under the shock of horror and grief and the strain of fruitless efforts to find Angela, Mrs. Tredgold became a nervous and physical wreck. She finally sank into a decline and died when little Ralph was barely eight years old. On her death-bed she extracted a promise from the boy that when he was a man he would make it his life purpose to find and redeem Angela, no matter how low she might have fallen. Two years after his wife’s death, Gilbert Tredgold died and Ralph was brought up by an uncle who was a clergyman.

When Ralph was twenty-one, his uncle gave into his hands a letter which his mother had dictated with her dying breath and in which she reminded him of his promise to find and reform Angela.

The next three years Ralph spent in unceasing efforts to communicate with his sister and induce her



to see him. In these endeavors he could call upon no detectives to aid him, because Angela, as the notorious leader of the band bequeathed to her by Dellarotti now dead, was sought as a criminal by the police of England and the continent. But at length, Ralph succeeded in getting an interview with her, told her of their mother's prayers and hopes for her redemption, and began to soften the veneer of hardness and criminality under which Angela had for years concealed her better and true self.

"I found, even in my first interview with her," said Tredgold, in a voice deep with emotion, "that Angela still had something in her of the tender loveliness of that golden-haired little Big Sister I could vaguely remember. The sweetness of her nature must have impressed even Dellarotti himself, for she said that he was never unkind to her, but, on the contrary, gratified her every wish except that of returning her to her mother, and, in fact, brought her up as a sort of little princess, seeming to take pride in her beauty and accomplishments—and giving her a fine education. He once told her that she was the one being for whom he had ever felt affection. But from the beginning she was given to understand that she was expected to follow a criminal career, that she was first to be his aid, and finally his successor. Gradually, his teachings effaced the memory of the Christian ethics in which

our mother had trained her and at last she came to look upon crime as Dellarotti looked upon it—as an adventurous game—a pitting of brain against brain. But murder she always strove against, and when she became leader of the band, killing was strictly forbidden except as a means of self-defense.

“At first, I despaired of being able to induce her to change her mode of living—for twenty years she had been dwelling among criminals and had thoroughly imbibed their warped viewpoint—but at heart, she was her mother’s daughter and gradually she came to see things in the right light. Fortunately, there was no man in her life to keep her chained to the criminal level. She had managed to inspire love without herself becoming entangled.”

“But what about X, her mysterious masked assistant?” interrupted the coroner. “The police have always held the theory that she fled with X when the gang was broken up, and so caused Madge Baylis, his young woman, to commit suicide by drowning.”

“That is not true,” said Ralph Tredgold earnestly. “When my sister decided to reform, she went with me to a small estate in Cornwall which I had inherited from my father. I do not know—and neither did my sister—what became of X. She severed all connection with the band and she had never regarded X as other than a business associate. She had com-

municated with him mainly by cipher writing and in what few interviews she had had with him, he had invariably been masked. It seems, however, that he had come to love her, but she told him in a final interview she had with him before I took her to Cornwall, that he could not win even her friendship until he, too, should reform. To the best of my knowledge, my sister never saw or heard from him again.

“We lived very quietly in our little Cornish home at Penhaven where Angela was known as Genevra Tredgold. She had, of course, inherited money from our mother and did not use a halfpenny of what she had collected through criminal operations. Instead, she saw to it before coming to Cornwall that all stolen jewels which had not been converted into money were sent back to the owners. The accumulated money was distributed among various charities. I am emphasizing this,” Tredgold added, “because I want the world to know that my sister had redeemed herself as far as it lay in her power to do, and, that as Genevra Tredgold, she started upon a new and entirely honorable life.

“It was unfortunate that Albert Arnold Tregarthen, a University man, should have come to Penhaven to spend his vacation, for my sister grew to love him and when he asked her to marry him, she dared not, for fear of losing him, confess what her

past had been. I condemned her for her moral cowardice—for her unfairness to him, she condemned herself, but he came of a proud old Cornish family and she knew that he would turn from her in horror if he learned what her previous life had been. I admit that she did him a cruel wrong in not telling of her past, but—she loved him. No one, he, least of all, can deny that.”

Tredgold’s voice was harsh and he gazed sternly at Arnold Tressady who returned him hostile glance for glance.

“Against my wishes and my better judgment,” Tredgold continued, “my sister was married to Albert Arnold Tregarthen in the little Anglican chapel at Penhaven, and so became his lawful wife—nothing less than that.”

“That will do for the present, at least, Mr. Tredgold,” said the coroner, a sympathetic note in his voice.

“Mr. Arnold Tressady is recalled.”

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE TESTIMONY OF MONSIEUR BARTOT

TRESSADY'S demeanor upon his recall was increasingly suggestive of cold contempt for coroner, jury, and the case in general. Under pressure he acknowledged that he had gone through a wedding ceremony with the woman whom he had known simply as Genevra Tredgold.

"But," he added haughtily, "I refuse to admit the legality of such a marriage. It would never have taken place had I known what she was, and I cannot forgive either her or her brother for wilfully keeping me in ignorance of facts which I had every right to be informed of before entering into union with her. I claim that a marriage under false pretences is no marriage at all, and from the day I learned that the woman I had married in good faith was Angela Dellarotti—a criminal—I allowed her to be nothing more to me than a stranger. I grant that she appeared to love me, and that is the one reason which deterred me from repudiating all obligations toward her. But I can find no excuse for her brother—he knew that I came of a family on whose scutcheon there was no blot and that during my university days

I had kept aloof from entanglements because I demanded a woman I could respect or none at all—and yet, Ralph Tredgold, knowing all this, stood passively by and allowed me to take to wife a criminal. From the day my eyes were opened to the fact, I forbade him to cross my threshold. He had the good sense to emigrate to Australia, but his sister, against my express command, and, for some years against my knowledge, corresponded with him regularly. I understand it was at her suggestion that he returned to England some three weeks ago.”

“How,” inquired the coroner, “did you learn the identity of the woman you had married?”

Arnold Tressady’s features settled into grimmer lines.

“Three months after the marriage, an Italian crook, a rejected suitor of—Genevra Tredgold—tracked her out and hounded her with threats of revenge. She submitted to blackmail in order to keep the truth from me, but I stumbled upon one of their interviews and he told me, distinctly and brutally, who she was. God! I was horror struck! I don’t know what restrained me from killing her. I had loved her with a man’s strongest devotion, idealized her, set her above all other women—and she was a *criminal!* Well, that ended everything between us. I succeeded through a friend in the diplomatic service in stopping my informant’s tongue by

threatening him with extradition to Italy where he was wanted on a charge of murder. Then I sold my house in Cornwall and took Genevra with me to London where I legally changed the name she had brought disgrace upon.

“Soon after this I purchased Pomander Lodge. I thought it not unlikely that other criminals might intrude themselves upon us at any time, and so I had the Lodge equipped with the latest burglar-proof devices, and had my study and Genevra’s rendered inaccessible by the absence of windows and the addition of bars across the skylights. I was ignorant of the fact that Giovanni Nullo was a criminal until he had been several months in our employ. As he had apparently been honest while serving as butler and Genevra pleaded that he be allowed to continue in the first straight work he had ever done, I did not insist upon his dismissal. His reformation of character seemed due to her efforts and so I let the matter rest. I considered it best that Genevra and I should be known as brother and sister. She developed a talent for play-writing, and I thought it well as I had found a certain amount of consolation and forgetfulness in historical research.”

“Had you contemplated divorce within the last year or so?” asked the coroner abruptly.

“Certainly not. It was always my endeavor to avoid notoriety and scandal.”

"But you knew that your friend, Mr. Hildreth Revelstoke, was paying court to your wife?"

"I knew nothing of the sort," Tressady denied with hauteur, "I believed that he was simply her friend as well as mine. I am bound to admit she never gave me occasion to doubt her absolute fidelity."

The coroner leaned a little nearer across the table.

"Could the same be said of you, Mr. Tressady?"

"I beg your pardon?" sharply.

"Your attentions to Elfinella, the dancer, have been rather marked for some months past," observed the coroner dryly.

Arnold Tressady bent eyes of cold fury upon his inquisitor.

"My acquaintance with Mlle. Elfinella involved no disloyalty to Genevra Tredgold. I admired her skill as a dancer and found mental relaxation in her society. Moreover, she was a protégée of my—wife—through whom I first met Mlle. Elfinella."

The coroner consulted his notes.

"At the preliminary inquest, you stated that on the day of Genevra Tressady's death, you lunched with her and then went on to the British Museum where you remained until your return to Pomander Lodge which you reached at about a quarter to five in the afternoon. Do you now desire to correct or amend that statement in any way?"



"I do not." But Tressady's features held a strained look.

The coroner allowed this matter to pass.

"Are you able now to offer any possible explanation or suggestion as to the meaning of your wife's dying words, 'The tiger's eye!' and the fact that she raised her arm and pointed to the tiger-skin rug at her feet?"

"I think now as I did then," Tressady answered firmly, "that both words and gesture were simply indications of delirium. She was dying in agony—her mind could hardly have been clear. I can find no other possible explanation."

"Your butler, Giovanni Nullo, is known as 'The Tiger,'" the coroner suggested.

Arnold Tressady assented.

"That is true. But I fail to see the connection in this instance."

Tressady was then permitted to withdraw from the witness-box. His admission—though forced—of his true relationship to the dead woman and of the undeniable wrong he had suffered through her had gained for him a certain amount of sympathy. This emotion on the part of the hearers received an abrupt check, however, upon the deposition of the succeeding witness.

This was a Frenchman, middle-aged, clean-shaven, pale, inclined to stoutness, with the suave, ingratiat-

ing manner of a *maître d'hôtel*. As a matter of fact, he proved to be Monsieur Bartot, Manager of the *Café du Bon Diable* in the vicinity of the Follies' Theatre.

Monsieur Bartot stated that he was well acquainted with Mr. Arnold Tressady, having had occasion on many nights during the past few months to reserve a special table for Mr. Tressady and that *danseuse superbe*, Mlle. Elfinella.

Inderwick glanced hastily at the little dancer. She was staring at the witness with wide, terrified eyes as though fearful of what he would say next. Lawrence Trent passed a protecting arm about her shoulders—she was trembling—and whispered something that was evidently intended to be reassuring. But her delicate face did not lose its pinched, worn look.

Monsieur Bartot, with many unctuous flourishes, proceeded to state that on June nineteenth—the day of the murder—Arnold Tressady in company with Mlle. Elfinella had partaken of an early afternoon tea at the *Café du Bon Diable*. Owing to the illness of the chief *maître d'hôtel*, he, Monsieur Bartot, had condescended to see that these two guests, both *si distingués*, were properly served. Ah! but Monsieur Tressady was *bien épris* of the petite Mademoiselle that afternoon—one found it most noticeable. And of a truth, Monsieur Bartot added remin-

iscently, Mademoiselle was *ravissante* that afternoon.

Recalled now to bald facts by the coroner, Monsieur Bartot stemmed his flow of Gallic volubility and declared that Monsieur Tressady and Mademoiselle had arrived at a quarter after two and had remained precisely one hour. "I, myself," he said, "gave Mademoiselle's instructions to the *commis-sionnaire*—these instructions were to have her driven *vite, bien vite*, to Pomander Lodge in Hampstead."

"But," the witness added hastily, eager to soften a statement that had almost the effect of an accusation, "it is certain that Mlle. Elfinella went in the friendliest spirit to Madame Tressady. I could not but overhear some of the conversation between Monsieur and Mademoiselle at table, and Mademoiselle spoke of some gift—some jewel—which she was desirous of presenting to Madame Tressady as testimony of love and gratitude. This gift she had with her in a little jewel box and she wished to show it to Monsieur Tressady, but when he saw the jeweler's name on the box, he would not look but pushed it away with violence. His face was *très furieux*, his voice *bien haute*—very loud. 'Was there no other jeweler in all London than this fiddling Trent?' he cried."

Monsieur Bartot paused and glanced across at the coroner.

"Does Monsieur desire that I continue further?"

"Most certainly." Coroner Purdy spoke sharply. "But no exaggerations—remember, you are under oath."

The witness assumed an injured air.

"Exaggeration, Monsieur, is foreign to my nature. It is the simple truth that Mademoiselle, too, became angry. 'I would have you know,' she said, with *ardeur*, 'that Monsieur Trent is past master of two arts—the violin and the jewelers' work—and please to recollect that he is also my very good friend.'

"I was then, Monsieur the coroner, called from the room for a few minutes, but when I returned Monsieur Tressady and Mademoiselle had smoothed away their little difference, the jewel-box was restored to Mademoiselle's hand bag, and Monsieur was more *épris* than ever. Of a truth, one could not blame him!" the Frenchman volunteered.

This concluded Monsieur Bartot's testimony. Inderwick considered it highly damaging for all three persons it involved. Tressady, through his infatuation for Elfinella, was proven to have an incentive for desiring his wife's removal, and was also proven to have lied in his statement at the preliminary inquest when he declared that he had lunched with Genevra on the day of her death. This lie had evidently been told for the purpose of concealing his friendship with Elfinella but, now that the statement

was known to be false, it served merely to militate against them both. Moreover, Elfinella apparently had visited Genevra Tressady between the time of Helen Martin's departure from Pomander Lodge and the discovery of the murder because, as Inderwick recollected, Jasmine had declared at the preliminary inquest that the little seamstress had left the house at a quarter after three, and that was the hour at which Monsieur Bartot had insisted that the dancer left the *Café du Bon Diable* with the intention of going directly to Pomander Lodge. In addition, Lawrence Trent also was involved through the fact that Elfinella was carrying as a gift to Genevra Tressady some jewelry made by Trent whose father, it seemed, had known the diabolical secrets of the goldsmith of the Borgias and might be presumed to have passed these secrets down to his son.

But no! Inderwick stoutly refused to consider Trent other than what he appeared to be—an ambitious, straight-living young man, his criminal antecedents, notwithstanding. As for Tressady, Inderwick was at a loss how to read him and, moreover, was unable to summon up any marked sympathy for him. Undoubtedly, he had suffered, but mainly through his pride, and he had avenged this wounded pride by inflicting a martyrdom of contempt and neglect upon the woman who, he admitted, had loved him, and finally, as a crowning misery, had forced

her, in the guise of his sister, to stand aside and permit his attentions to another woman. For the frivolous little dancer brought suddenly face to face with tragedy, Inderwick felt infinite pity—she was in peril, there was no doubt of it. He, for his part, was sure that she was incapable of murder, but would the law share his belief in view of the damning evidence that was unfolding against her?

And to what extent could she or would she protect herself? In an effort to shield Trent, she had admitted to Inspector Burton that she had been alone with Genevra Tressady on the afternoon of her death; if, when she was called to the witness-box she should again be so recklessly generous, and it could be proven or even inferred that she had been the last person to see her benefactress before death came upon her, what verdict *could* the jury reasonably arrive at except that she was guilty and should be held for trial? The fact that the macaw had again and again called her name while apparently echoing his mistress's dying reproaches would, of course, be brought out soon and emphasized, thus increasing the evidence piling up against her. To be sure, Trent's visiting-card had been found on the floor of the study, but if Elfinella asserted to the court, as she had done to Inspector Burton, that she herself had dropped the card there, the jury would see no rea-

son to doubt her unless more damaging evidence should be brought out against Trent.

At present, Inderwick hardly saw how that could be possible. He looked across at the drooping little figure of the dancer—she was hopelessly involved and the poor girl knew it.

Jasmine, following his glance, slipped a cold little hand into his.

“Hal,” she whispered, “if you are called to testify, try to protect Elfinella, won’t you—for *my* sake?”

“I will do my best,” he reassured her, “but why do you say for *your* sake? Why is it that she means so much to you?”

Before Jasmine could reply, her name was peremptorily rapped out by the coroner. The girl rose unsteadily to her feet, her pretty, gypsy face blanched.

“Hal,” she whispered imploringly, “pray that I may not make matters worse for poor Nella.”

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE SECOND HELEN

As Interwick had feared, the coroner was ruthless in his examination of Jasmine. From the first, he sensed her intention to shield Elfinella and bent every energy to thwart her purpose. And the girl, worn out by days of suspense culminating in this pitiless third degree, was forced into one damaging admission after another, her feverish denials of which, as soon as she became aware of the seriousness of what she had unwittingly disclosed, carried no weight with the hearers, not even with Inderwick himself.

When Jasmine finally tottered from the witness-box, she carried with her the sickening realization that she had blackened the case against Elfinella by the following admissions:

1. That as Arnold Tressady's attentions toward the little dancer became more pronounced, Genevra's affection for her protégée grew correspondingly cooler.

2. That Elfinella by no means discouraged Tressady's attentions, and that there had been friction



for several weeks past between Arnold and Genevra, presumably on account of these attentions.

3. That on the afternoon of Miss Tressady's death, Jasmine had closed the door of her own sitting-room immediately after the departure of Helen Martin and so could not state what other visitor or visitors her employer may have received prior to her death.

4. That she had heard the outer door bell ring a few minutes after the seamstress had left.

To this latter admission, Jasmine added an hysterical denial that she had heard any one come up the stairs and enter Miss Tressady's study.

The coroner, however, made it unpleasantly obvious that a woman stepping lightly might easily have ascended and descended the stairs without Jasmine's knowledge if, as the girl had declared, the door of the room in which she sat had been closed.

At the conclusion of Jasmine's ordeal, Inderwick glanced over at Lawrence Trent and Elfinella. The violinist was as nearly white as one of his swarthy complexion could be, while the blue eyes of the little dancer were set in despair and horror.

Hildreth Revelstoke was summoned next. The theatrical producer, as he confronted that sea of eager faces, presented his customary calmly-assured bearing and answered the coroner's interrogations in grave, mellow tones that gave no clue to the emotions that must be surging under his composed ex-

terior if he were human and not a mere automaton. But he had undeniably lost flesh and color, his fine hazel eyes seemed slightly sunken, and his plentiful brown hair in the high lights showed glints of silver. Plainly, he had suffered and was suffering still.

Revelstoke had evidently decided that it was incumbent upon him at this stage of the proceedings to give a clear and concise account of his relations with the dead woman. According to his statement, he had first met her some four years previous in his capacity as dramatic producer. Their acquaintance had ripened into friendship, and finally, on his part, at least, into love. For two years he had been desirous of making her his wife, but she would give no definite answer to his proposals, simply putting him off from time to time. However, on the evening before her death, he had insisted as his right that she give him a definite answer. Upon her direct refusal of his suit, he complained that he considered her treatment of him unfair in having encouraged his attentions if she had not loved him.

She broke down then and confessed that she was married to Arnold Tressady, her supposed brother. Overcome by grief and bitterness, Revelstoke sharply upbraided her for deceiving him and they parted unpleasantly.

After a sleepless night of reflection, Revelstoke decided that, as a gentleman, he owed her an apology

for certain caustic remarks he had made to her. So in the morning he called at Pomander Lodge to offer his apologies. She, however, refused to see him, so he went to his offices, transacted some important theatrical business, lunched at the Adelphi Club, and then took the two o'clock train to his country estate at Edgemere in Surrey, where he remained until the next morning. Upon his arrival at his offices, he was informed of Miss Tressady's death.

"I understand," said the coroner, "that you were also an intimate friend of Arnold Tressady's?"

"I *was*." The emphasis on the past tense was sharp.

"You are no longer on friendly terms?"

Revelstoke's eyes met Arnold Tressady's across the thronged courtroom in a prolonged glance of hostility.

"Mr. Tressady had participated in the deception practised upon me."

"Did Genevra Tressady confess to you that she was in reality Angela Dellarotti?"

"No; I learned that to-day for the first time." But did Revelstoke's assertion ring entirely true?

"Have there been recriminations between you and Mr. Tressady since you learned his true relationship to the woman you hoped to marry?" asked the coroner.

Revelstoke's reply was deliberate and frank.

"I called upon Mr. Tressady two days after his wife's death and made unmistakably plain my opinion of a man who would permit a friend to pay suit to his wife under the impression that she was a free woman, and, in addition, pursue with amorous attentions a young woman whom he knew was practically engaged to another man."

Again Revelstoke's and Tressady's gaze met in bitter hostility, and those knotted veins of passion started out once more on the latter's forehead as always happened when he strove to master his fury.

Coroner Purdy concluded his interrogation by asking if Revelstoke had as yet discovered the missing play, "Titania's Flight" on which Genevra Tressady had been working on the afternoon of her death, and which he, Revelstoke, was to use as a vehicle for "starring" Elfinella.

The theatrical producer responded that he had no clue whatever to the whereabouts of the missing play.

"One more question, Mr. Revelstoke," said the coroner. "Was it entirely your own idea to 'star' Elfinella, and were you to be the sole 'backer' of the production?"

"As a matter of fact," Revelstoke answered gravely, "the idea of 'starring' Elfinella did not originate with me at all. Mr. Arnold Tressady came to

me with the information that—Miss Tressady—was at work upon a fairy extravaganza containing a leading rôle which was eminently suited for Elfinella, and made the proposition that if I would produce this play on a lavish scale and give Elfinella the prominence and fame that she was ambitious for, he would assume all financial responsibility. He added only one stipulation.”

“And that was?”

Once more Revelstoke’s gaze sought Arnold Tressady and there was cold contempt in his eye.

“The stipulation,” he replied, with studied deliberation, “was that his sister, as he called her, was to suppose that I was the sole backer of her protégée—in short, that Arnold Tressady’s hand was not to be seen in the matter. I thought his excuse for this stipulation a strange one at the time, but I can, of course, understand it now.”

Under the mask of Revelstoke’s well-bred composure a wealth of bitterness was betraying itself.

Coroner Purdy stroked his clean-shaven chin and surveyed the witness speculatively.

“When you learned from her own lips that Genevra Tressady was the wife instead of the sister of Arnold Tressady, did your feeling for her undergo a change—I mean a radical change—something deeper than the momentary resentment you have re-

ferred to and for which you say it was your intention to apologize?"

Revelstoke's handsome features contracted; he passed the back of his hand quickly across his eyes, then, with a visible effort, he partly regained his poise, but his voice in replying held a deep, emotional note that it had not held before.

"Genevra Tressady," he responded, "had for some years been the one woman in the world for me—I revered, as well as loved, her, for I knew her worth, knew the strength of her character, and, criminal though she once was, I dare to maintain that she was immeasurably superior to the man of unblemished antecedents who trampled on her love for him and made her life one long martyrdom, culminating in his infatuation for a girl whom his wife was befriending."

This time Tressady's eyes fell under the accusing fire in those of his former friend. Elfinella was weeping softly.

Revelstoke's fine figure straightened as he turned now to the coroner.

"My love for Genevra Tressady—or Angela Del-larotti, if you will—has been the best, the purest thing in my life, and it would be impossible that my feeling for her could undergo a change. Are you answered now?"

Coroner Purdy nodded.

"That will do for the present, thank you."

Hildreth Revelstoke stepped down from the witness-box.

The coroner waited a moment, then he summoned the next witness with his customary official brusqueness.

Inderwick started in amazement at the name of this witness, and Jasmine, with a little moan, shivered up against him.

"Miss Helen Holland!" Coroner Purdy had rapped out.

Had he made a mistake in the Christian name? Was Jasmine being recalled?

But no! Elfinella, the little broken butterfly, was staggering to her feet. Elfinella! Inderwick's senses swam in bewilderment.

"Miss Helen Holland!" the coroner called again, and his tone seemed cruelly insistent.

Elfinella went blindly, gropingly, toward the witness-box.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### CROSS FIRE

ONCE seated, however, in the witness-box, Elfinella succeeded in summoning up a certain degree of composure, although mute suffering showed itself in every line of her face. In a low-pitched, musical voice she answered the coroner's preliminary questions, stating that her baptismal name was Helen Holland, that she was the elder sister of Jasmine Holland and that she had been a stage dancer, mainly in provincial towns, for the past eight years.

Inderwick now wondered at himself for not having guessed her identity. He remembered that in the beginning of his friendship with Jasmine, she had told him of her sister, two years older than herself, who, when barely eighteen, had run away from home and gone on the stage to the horror of her puritanical-minded parents who believed that a theatrical life could lead only to perdition. Her father had disowned her and her mother had acquiesced in his decision, and when she lay dying a few months later, had refused to see Helen whom Jasmine had informed of their mother's illness. Inderwick knew



that Jasmine had always been very fond of "Nell" as she called her and that after their father's death some three years later, she had sought out her sister and travelled about with her for several weeks, acting as her dresser and general factotum. But stage life in a cheap, provincial company was highly distasteful to Jasmine and she had left her sister and come to London in search of more congenial work.

It was then that Genevra Tressady took the friendless West Country girl into her employ, and Inderwick had always supposed that Jasmine had not seen Nell since their parting in the provinces.

The coroner, proceeding with his examination, was approaching dangerous ground.

"How long had you been acquainted with the woman known as Genevra Tressady?"

Elfinella locked her little hands tightly together.

"About two years, sir."

"How did you come to meet her?"

"Through my sister. Jasmine told her that I was doing a singing and dancing act at the Magnet Picture Palace; Miss Tressady came to see my act, was interested and became a very good friend to me"—Elfinella's voice quivered. "She introduced me to Mr. Revelstoke and persuaded him to give me a chance at his new theatre—the Follies' Theatre."

"Mr. Arnold Tressady also became a very good friend to you?" insinuated the coroner.

The little dancer bestowed on her inquisitor an appealing glance from her deep blue eyes.

"I did not know until to-day that he was anything more than her brother," she protested.

"You noticed, did you not, that his attentions to you were displeasing to Miss Tressady?"

Her low-breathed "No!" scarcely carried across the room.

"Miss Tressady's displeasure was apparent to your sister," Coroner Purdy reminded her coldly.

"Perhaps I—perhaps I did notice it," Elfinella faltered. "But I truly thought he was just her brother—*everybody* thought so!"

"Would it have made much difference in your acceptance of his attentions had you known the true facts of the case?" inquired the coroner sarcastically.

The blue eyes now flashed indignant reproach.

"You think that I would try to take her husband from my best friend and from my sister's best friend, too? Oh, I am not as bad as that!"

Coroner Purdy regarded unsympathetically the flushed and distressed face of the witness.

"What then did you think was the cause of her displeasure?"

"I was puzzled by it—truly I was! Then I thought it might be partly because I was just a little nobody, and partly because of Lorry—Mr. Trent."

“What about Mr. Trent?” snapped the coroner. Elfinella drooped her head.

“Miss Tressady knew that Mr. Trent was—was fond of me, and she thought—she told me—that I was treating him shabbily.”

“So Mr. Tressady is Trent’s rival?” There was a distinct sneer in the coroner’s voice.

Elfinella flung up her golden head defensively and yet proudly.

“I admit that I was silly enough to be flattered and dazzled by Mr. Tressady’s attentions, but neither he nor any man was ever really Lawrence Trent’s rival—I just wouldn’t listen to my own heart, that’s all!”

Nevertheless, the coroner was not to be influenced in her favor—her frank ingenuousness he set down as merely clever acting.

“But you would have gone on accepting Arnold Tressady’s attentions and have allowed him to ‘back’ you as a star, if it had not seemed indiscreet and even dangerous in view of your close connection with the mystery of Genevra Tressady’s death, is it not so?”

Elfinella’s delicate features quivered.

“Oh, I don’t expect you to believe me,” she said with sorrowful bitterness, “but from the moment the police began to insinuate wicked and impossible things about Lorry, I realized that no person and

nothing in all the world mattered as much to me as Lorry—I knew then just how empty a glory theatrical stardom really was, and I told Mr. Tressady all this late last night when he came to my flat and asked me to marry him when this horrible, horrible inquest was over.”

Coroner Purdy continued to survey her coldly while turning his examination to the day of the murder.

Elfinella admitted the truth of Monsieur Bartot's testimony. She had, indeed, lunched with Mr. Tressady and had left him at a few minutes after three and taken a taxi-cab to Pomander Lodge. It was true also that she and Mr. Tressady had had a slight tiff over Lawrence Trent, but they had parted amicably and he had seemed pleased that she was bearing a little gift to Miss Tressady.

“What was this gift?” demanded the coroner.

“Oh, just a little token of my gratitude and love.”

The coroner's brows drew together. “This ‘little token of your gratitude and love’ was some kind of jewelry, was it not, jewelry made by Lawrence Trent at his lapidary shop in Ragged Friars' Alley?”

“Oh, no, no!” The little dancer's voice was sharply pitched. “It was not made by Mr. Trent—Monsieur Bartot was mistaken about that—the jewelry was a family heirloom that had been handed

down to me—I simply put it in a box marked with the name of Lorenzo Trentini.”

“What was this piece of jewelry, Miss Holland?” Coroner Purdy’s tone was markedly hostile.

“An emerald pendant,” she answered quickly.

“You assert that this piece of jewelry was not made by Trent or Trentini?”

“I do assert that it was not.”

“But it has passed through his hands, has it not,” demanded the coroner, “for the purpose of being cleaned or reset?”

Elfinella’s pallor became extreme.

“I don’t know what you are trying to prove”—her voice hysterical—“but Lawrence Trent never had that emerald pendant in his possession for one moment. It was my property and I carried it directly to Miss Tressady; it passed from my hands to hers without any intermediary.”

At this juncture, Inderwick glanced across at Lawrence Trent. It was evident that the young violinist was laboring under severe tension. His eyes, strained and despairing, never left Elfinella and he seemed to be struggling against an almost uncontrollable desire to interrupt her testimony with some denial or admission. Marianna, her face, like Trent’s, as nearly white as the Latin blood in her veins would permit, kept a restraining grip upon her brother’s arm.

“You are sure,” the coroner was asking, his tone decidedly unpleasant, “that the gift you carried to Miss Tressady was an emerald pendant and not some sort of stiletto—such as this?” He suddenly flashed before her startled eyes the slim Florentine dagger with needle-like tip which Inspector Burton had wrested from Marianna on the night he and Inderwick had discovered the dead body of Helen Martin in the room above Trentini’s lapidary shop and with which, he, the coroner, had previously confronted the police surgeon.

Strangely, Elfinella gained composure as she stared at the slender knife.

“It is absurd to suppose I would carry a dagger to Miss Tressady as a gift—a token of my love.”

“I do not say you would carry it as a token of your *love*.” Coroner Purdy scowled down upon the needle-like point of the stiletto. “Dr. Telworthy has declared that the abrasions upon the fingers of Genevra Tressady’s right hand might have been made by the tip of a dagger such as this, and if the point had previously been dipped in poison, we have an explanation as to the manner of injection of this deadly *Purpurus Somnus* into her veins.”

Elfinella swayed in her chair.

“No, no!” she cried. “I carried no dagger—it was an emerald pendant I brought her.”

The coroner viewed reflectively the keen steel of the stiletto.

“This knife has been recently and carefully cleaned. The other daggers forming the collection from which this was taken in Trentini’s lapidary shop have not been so recently and carefully cleaned. Why should this dagger alone have received such particular attention?”

An answer to his question came, not from the broken little butterfly in the witness-box but from Marianna Trentini who, regardless of court etiquette, sprang to her feet, her black eyes flashing scorn and indignation.

“The reason, signore, it is that that dagger is mine, it belong to me, my father has fashion it for me many year ago. You will see my name, Marianna, on the handle if you look verra close. I keep it always polish bright and it has not lef’ my brother’s shop since I bring it with me from Napoli till your detective man steal it from me.”

The coroner rapped for order and a scandalized usher forced Marianna to sit down. The Neapolitan complied, but the hot resentment she felt against the coroner and the legal force which had taken her lover from her and was now trying to incriminate her brother and the girl he loved, showed itself in the fire of her eyes.

Coroner Purdy had harked back to the emerald pendant.

“If Geneva Tressady received this gift from you, how do you account for the fact that it has not been found in her study or anywhere among her effects?”

“I can’t account for it,” said Elfinella faintly.

Instructed then to give an exact account of all that had taken place during her last interview with the dead woman, the little dancer told a halting and somewhat incoherent tale. They had discussed the part she was to play in “Titania’s Flight” and Miss Tressady had given her the manuscript to carry to Lawrence Trent in order that he might make some changes in the musical score.

“While we were talking,” Elfinella volunteered irrelevantly, “I opened my hand-bag to take out my handkerchief and I dropped a visiting-card of Mr. Trent’s which I had with me.”

Lawrence Trent made a motion as though to spring to his feet, and the coroner, observing this, rapped out a warning with his gavel.

“If you were aware that you had dropped the card,” snapped Coroner Purdy, “why did you not pick it up instead of leaving it upon the floor?”

For a moment Elfinella sat speechless. She was plainly nearing the end of her strength and her resources. Finally, she answered weakly, “I—I sup-



pose some little thing must have occurred to turn my mind from it.”

“Such as,” the coroner charged, his face settling into grimmer lines, “Miss Tressady’s expressions of gratitude for the gift you had brought her, or—possibly, her dying cries of reproach which the macaw imitated so realistically, ‘Nella, Nella, Elfinella!’”

“Not that, not that!”

The little dancer clasped her hands over her ears as though to shut out the echoes of those cries. Her eyes dilated with horror, she slipped forward in her chair and swayed over the rail of the witness-box. She had fainted under the torture.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE JURY'S VERDICT

WHILE the fainting girl was carried from the courtroom by the police surgeon and one of the ushers, Lawrence Trent was forcibly restrained from accompanying them and was summoned to the witness-box.

From the first, it was apparent that Coroner Purdy was prejudiced against the young violinist who met his battery of cross questions with unshaken and baffling composure. In fact, it seemed as though Trent had steeled himself to expect neither justice nor mercy, and so considered it almost futile to attempt to defend himself. However that might be, his defense was far from being a vigorous one.

But to Inderwick, at least, his protestation of gratitude and affection for Genevra Tressady rang true. Trent denied that he had ever been associated with the criminal band of which she had been the leader or that he had ever assisted his father in any nefarious work. He declared that Genevra Tressady had taken a special interest in him because he was his father's son and she wished him to keep to the

straight path in spite of his antecedents as she herself was doing then.

Although in the matter of his past life and his sentiments toward the dead woman, Lawrence Trent might be said to defend himself, he was far from doing so when the coroner's examination approached the day of the murder. Inderwick was forced to the belief that he was shielding some one at his own expense. And if that were so, whom could he be shielding except Elfinella? The case looked dark for them both.

In reply to a question from the coroner, Lawrence Trent stated that the missing manuscript of "Titania's Flight" was locked in a secret compartment of a Venetian cabinet in his lapidary shop, and that he had not mentioned this before through fear of a false construction being put upon the fact that it had come into his possession at a time so nearly bordering upon that of the murder of its author.

"The deposition of the preceding witness that she brought you this manuscript for revision, is true?" asked the coroner.

Trent passed his hand with a nervous gesture over his sleek, black hair.

"The preceding witness, out of consideration for me, falsified some of her statements."

The coroner looked up from his notes—triumphant.

“That admission does not surprise the court, but kindly correct, for the benefit of the jury, whatever statements of the preceding witness were falsified. Of course,” he added hastily, “it is only fair to warn you that anything you say will be held against you, and you are not bound to incriminate yourself.”

Trent bowed coldly.

“I thank you, sir, for the warning, but I do not care to protect myself at Miss Helen Holland’s expense. She did not bring the manuscript to me; it was handed to me by Genevra Tressady herself on the afternoon of her death.”

The coroner sat up and laid aside his pen.

“Then you were at Pomander Lodge on the afternoon of Wednesday, June nineteenth?”

Trent moistened his lips.

“Yes, sir.”

“At what hour?” the coroner asked with ominous quiet.

The young violinist carefully avoided his sister’s anguished eyes.

“I should say it was about a quarter of four.”

“Who admitted you?”

Trent’s fingers gripped the edge of the witness-box.

“No one did. As I went up the steps, the door opened and Elfinella—Miss Helen Holland—came out. We spoke only a few words together as we

both had other engagements to keep, and I went directly up to Miss Tressady's study."

"Unannounced?"

"Yes, sir; she was expecting me. She wanted to discuss some revisions to be made in the musical score of 'Titania's Flight.' "

"You went up unannounced and yet carried your visiting-card with you?" queried the coroner sarcastically.

The witness flushed and looked sharply at his interrogator as though to fathom the purpose behind this question.

"No, sir," he said finally, "I did not carry up my visiting-card. It probably got upon the floor in the way Mlle. Elfinella stated—no doubt she did pull it out of her bag with her handkerchief."

Coroner Purdy let this suggestion pass.

"When you entered the study, in what state of health did you find Miss Tressady?"

The tension in the courtroom grew. Audible whisperings arose and were sternly silenced by the ushers.

Trent hesitated a moment before replying, as though weighing what answer he should give. It was evident from the expression on the faces of the jurors that this hesitation told against him.

The witness seemed uncomfortably aware of the disfavor he was creating against himself. His grip

tightened on the edge of the witness-box and his face became swarthily pale. His reply, however, was given in firm and even tones.

“I found her in a perfectly normal state of health, sir. We spent a few minutes discussing the revisions to be made and then I left the Lodge, taking the manuscript with me.”

“At what time did you leave? Be as exact as you can.”

“It was five minutes of four, sir. I consulted my watch as I had another engagement.”

“‘Five minutes of four,’” repeated the coroner, his voice echoing through the room with harsh insistence, “and Miss Tressady was found dying of poison shortly after four o’clock. Not much time, was there, between your departure and the commencement of her death agony?”

“Not much, sir,” Trent admitted faintly.

The coroner, with frowning brows, continued the attack.

“What was her state of health when you left the study?”

“The same as when I entered it, sir—perfectly normal.”

“Did you hear her lock the door after you?”

The witness appeared confused by the question.

“I don’t know—I—that is, yes, sir. The door was found locked on the inside, wasn’t it?”

"I am asking the questions, not you, Mr. Trent," reprimanded the coroner. "Did you, or did you not, hear Miss Tressady lock the door of her study?"

A gleam of resentment at the coroner's words and tone flashed in Lawrence Trent's eyes.

"I cannot state positively. I hurried down the stairs, intent on reaching my next appointment on time."

Coroner Purdy let this pass also.

"Did you have anything to do with the emerald pendant which Miss Helen Holland says that she gave Miss Tressady?"

"I know nothing about that pendant, sir. I have neither handled nor seen it."

"Miss Tressady did not then have this pendant upon her neck or near her person while you were in the study?"

"She did not, sir." Trent's voice was a sharp staccato.

The coroner scrutinized a moment the notes on the table before him, then straightened to the attack, launching a question in the nature of an accusation that appalled the spectators as well as the man in the witness-box.

"What sort of poisoned jewelry or stiletto was it then, that you, the inheritor of your father's nefarious secrets, fashioned for Genevra Tressady and entrusted to Helen Holland to carry to her?"

Beads of moisture started out on the violinist's forehead. He stared speechless for several moments at his inquisitor. Then a grim, resigned look settled over his features and he answered composedly.

"I do not expect that any one connected with the police will believe the word of Giorgio Trentini's son, but I assure you that I have never fashioned any article that was intended to bring harm to Genevra Tressady, my benefactress and my friend."

The coroner grunted something unintelligible.

"Did you not entice away and secrete in your lodgings, a woman whose testimony might have thrown considerable light on events leading up to Genevra Tressady's death? I refer to the seamstress, Helen Martin."

The introduction of Helen Martin's name was plainly unwelcome to the witness, but he still maintained composure, although his efforts to do so were obvious.

"I did not entice Helen Martin to my lodgings, sir, nor did I want her there. She came to me for shelter and protection and I could not turn her into the street."

"What excuse did she give for running away and going into hiding?"

Lawrence Trent palpably did not like this question.

"The story she told me was a somewhat confused



one, sir. I don't remember much of it now except that she did not wish to be mixed up with the police. She was not very well and she wanted to be quiet."

"How did she happen to come to you for shelter?"

"That is not surprising, sir. She knew me both through Miss Tressady and through Mr. Revelstoke. She had been doing sewing at the Follies' Theatre for some months—mending costumes and patching up properties."

"It is a curious coincidence," observed the coroner dryly, "that this missing witness should die in your lodgings from the same poison, according to medical experts, from which the woman about whose death she might have given valuable testimony died. How do you account for this, Mr. Trent?"

"I cannot account for it, sir." The violinist straightened and there was manliness and sincerity in his voice as he said, "I do not ask you to believe in my innocence in regard to these two deaths by poison—I suppose it is asking too much since I am Giorgio Trentini's son—but I do ask you not to condemn me without first questioning what possible motive I could have for killing the woman who was my benefactress and my true friend."

"It is for the jury to condemn if they think the evidence warrants it," said the coroner coldly. "Mo-

tives are often strangely hidden, but existent none the less."

That concluded Trent's examination and the case was given over to the jury.

Inderwick's sympathies were all with Trent and Elfinella, but, in view of the circumstantial evidence, together with the damaging admissions made by both, he feared the worst.

The jury was out less than an hour. When it was announced that they were ready to render their decision, Elfinella, wan and anxious, was assisted back to the courtroom by the police-surgeon and her sister, Jasmine, who alone had been permitted to go to her.

The wounded "Tiger," guarded now by two constables, still occupied the railed enclosure in which he had been penned during the course of the inquest, and, as the jurors filed back to their seats, he studied the face of each man with mingled bitterness and apprehension. Marianna's nervousness had become extreme, but she made a brave effort to smile encouragingly at her lover, as Giovanni's tortured eyes sought and held hers for a moment and then flashed to the foreman of the jury already voicing the decision of his fellows.

Inderwick's fears were realized. Lawrence Trent, Elfinella, and The Tiger were held without bonds for

trial; Trent on a charge of wilful murder, the others as accessories before and after the fact.

All three bore the verdict with courage. Now that the suspense was over and the blow had fallen, both Giovanni and the little dancer showed a stoic resignation that was in surprising contrast to the apprehensiveness they had exhibited during the inquest.

Elfinella did not even break down when bidding her sister goodbye; as a matter of fact, she was the calmer of the two and did not require the supporting arm of the constable who came to lead her away to the prison cell where she must await trial.

Arnold Tressady seemed like a man on the verge of collapse as Elfinella was led away and loudly announced his intention of forcing the Crown to accept bail for her.

Detective Inspector Burton, on the other hand, expressed great satisfaction over the verdict and declared his conviction that within a very short time the three prisoners would stand in the Old Bailey Dock and be sentenced to death.

"Much as I regret to disappoint you, my dear Inspector," suddenly interposed Mercedes Quero, her eyes brilliant, her smile mocking, "I assure you that one person only can be held accountable for the murder of Genevra Tressady, and I greatly fear that *you*, in spite of your very clever deductions in this

case, will never cause that person to stand in the Old Bailey Dock."

"But *you* will, no doubt," growled Burton.

Mercedes Quero's smile became inscrutable.

"I will tell you what I *will* do, Inspector Burton. Meet me this evening at eight o'clock in the alcoved study at Pomander Lodge and I will show you the diabolical bit of mechanism that brought death to Genevra Tressady."

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE CLUE OF THE TIGER'S EYE

It was a solemn, but tense, little gathering of people that met Mercedes Quero in Genevra Tressady's study that evening. Inspector Burton was punctual to the moment, arriving before even Miss Quero herself. Inderwick, Jasmine, Weatherley, Arnold Tressady, and Ralph Tredgold had availed themselves of the detective's invitation to be present.

Arnold Tressady had made forcible objections to Mr. Tredgold's presence and, in fact, had ordered him from the Lodge. Ralph Tredgold, however, calmly stood his ground, and claimed it as his right to hear any further disclosures that might throw light upon the mystery of his sister's death.

"Mr. Tredgold has a double right to be with us this evening," interposed Mercedes Quero. "It is he who engaged me to work upon this case."

Tressady shot a peculiarly resentful look at his brother-in-law.

"I suspected as much," he said grimly. "You are determined to have all possible notoriety."

"I am determined," answered Tredgold sternly,

“to have my sister’s murderer discovered at *any* cost to myself or to others.”

Jasmine trembled at the relentless note in Tredgold’s voice, and Inderwick knew that she was thinking of Elfinella and dreading lest Mercedes Quero’s disclosures should further incriminate the little dancer. He believed that Arnold Tressady shared the same apprehension, for Tressady seemed to have aged even in the few hours elapsing since the jury’s verdict had been rendered, and his eyes, as they scrutinized the woman detective, were strained and a bit blood-flecked.

“Suppose we get down to business then, Miss Quero,” he bade harshly. “I understand you to claim that you can produce from some recess or hidden place in this study, the instrument or mechanism that brought death to—my wife.” He spoke the last two words with effort.

The detective nodded gravely.

“I can, Mr. Tressady.”

She flashed an all-embracing glance about the windowless room, and Inderwick, with pulses quickened by suspense, followed her gaze. The study was in practically the same condition as he had seen it last except that the curtains of the alcove had been taken down and the big, broken cage that had held the poisoned macaw showed now in its entirety, the twisted and shattered wires testifying to the vio-

lence of Tressady's and Giovanni's efforts to silence the accusing bird. The wall lamp, only, had been switched on, bringing out in relief the fine old eighteenth-century furniture in which Genevra Tressady had delighted, and leaving in comparative shadow the centre of the room which was occupied by the Jacobean writing-table with its Chippendale seat, and stretched on the floor near it lay that sinister tiger-skin rug with its up-reared head and snarling jaws. Through the barred skylight, the moon's rays filtered down, tracing pale, weird bands of light across the savage beast's head and causing the beady eyes to glitter dully.

Every one's gaze was bent in a kind of morbid fascination upon that rug, and it seemed to Inderwick that he could almost hear again the faint, dying words of Genevra Tressady: "The tiger's eye!"

Jasmine shivered and pressed closer to him. The horror of this room of tragedy held her in its grip. Suddenly she gave a sharp cry of terror, which was loudly echoed by Weatherley. Inderwick felt the cold sweat start on his forehead.

For a brief instant the study was flooded with darkness, uncannily moon-flecked, then, equally without warning, the electric drop-lamp upon the writing-table flashed on, its brilliant light beating down upon the tiger's head and seeming to make it leap forth from the surrounding shadows with fero-

scious yellow eyes agleam and cruel, fang-like teeth bared in the distended jaws.

Jasmine swayed in Inderwick's supporting grasp. Her face was ghastly.

"Oh, let me go!" she moaned. "I cannot stay in this awful room."

"No one is to leave now," objected Mercedes Quero, in crisp, authoritative tones, her fingers still upon the switch of the electric table lamp, her gaze sharply scrutinizing the startled countenances of those in the little gathering she had called together.

"What is the meaning, Miss Quero, of this melodrama of sudden darkness and then light?" angrily demanded Arnold Tressady.

"Just a little experiment in human emotions, Mr. Tressady." The detective spoke in a notably sweet voice, but her usually pale face was flushed and her eyes like brilliant mirrors of steel.

Something like a tremor shook the massive shoulders of Arnold Tressady. A greyish hue had spread over his countenance.

"What do you hope to prove by this theatric trickery?" He seemed to force into his voice a contempt which he was far from feeling.

Mercedes Quero flashed him a quick and baffling smile.

"Now don't," she begged, "try to persuade me to anticipate a climax."



Arnold Tressady turned impatiently to Burton who stood by the writing-table, alert and ready for action, regarding Mercedes Quero with a kind of grudging admiration.

"Will you be good enough, Inspector, as a representative of Scotland Yard, to state plainly whatever suspicions you detectives hold and put an end to this cat-and-mouse policy?"

"This is her party, not mine," growled Burton. "As far as Scotland Yard is concerned, the case was closed with the verdict of the coroner's jury, but *she* thinks she has some more fireworks to shoot off. You will have to let her shoot them in her own good time."

Mercedes Quero nodded approvingly.

"Admirably put, Inspector Burton. Really, I do appreciate your willingness to stand by me as silent partner. I think I can promise you quite a pyrotechnic display before this case comes up for trial."

Burton gave her a wry smile.

"Shoot off whenever you like, Miss Quero," he said tolerantly.

Weatherley dropped her matronly bulk suddenly into the nearest chair.

"I feel a bit faint-like," she apologized.

Mercedes Quero gave the white-faced house-keeper a fleeting, sidelong glance, then, to Inderwick's surprise, addressed herself to him.

“At the preliminary inquest held here in this room directly after Miss Tressady’s death,” she began in clear-cut tones, “you stated, Mr. Inderwick, that Giovanni Nullo was the first to enter this study when the door had been broken in. You further stated that you observed him stoop and pick up something from the floor, and that it was your impression that this article was a ring. Under pressure, Giovanni admitted that he had picked up a ring, fearing it would be stepped on. To support this admission, he drew from a jeweler’s box in his breast pocket a sard ring which Mr. Tressady identified as having belonged to the dead woman. Do you believe, Mr. Inderwick, that this sard ring was the article which you saw Giovanni pick up from the floor?”

“I do not, Miss Quero,” Inderwick answered without hesitation, “for he would not have had time to take the box from his pocket, remove the cover, place the ring inside and then return the box to his pocket. On the contrary, he stooped very swiftly immediately upon his entrance into the study, then he made a leap across the room and straightened up at once.”

“Can you indicate the spot at which Giovanni stooped?”

Inderwick considered.

“I was under such a tension that I cannot be sure now, but I should say it was only a few steps beyond the threshold.”

The detective smiled with satisfaction at the answer.

"That is very likely," she conceded. "And now where did this leap Giovanni made bring him to?"

Again Inderwick weighed his answer. He was conscious of increasing apprehension on Jasmine's part. Arnold Tressady had himself well in hand by now, but there was still an ashen hue to his features. Weatherley was slumped weakly in her chair, muttering to herself something that sounded like a prayer. Ralph Tredgold, his earnest, ascetic face tense with emotion, followed with minute attention every word uttered by the detective and Inderwick. The latter, appreciating Tredgold's anxiety to get at the truth of his sister's death, felt it incumbent upon him to be especially exact in his replies.

"I think," he said cautiously, "that Giovanni leaped in the direction of the tiger-skin rug, for I remember distinctly that when Miss Tressady pointed to the rug, Giovanni was standing over it. The thought came to me—an absurd thought I suppose—that he stood there like a sentinel on guard."

"Your thought was not an absurd one, Mr. Inderwick," said Mercedes Quero gravely. "As a matter of fact, Giovanni was on guard; he was guarding the hiding-place of the deadly little mechanism that killed Genevra Tressady."

As she spoke, she knelt down by the tiger-skin

rug and her slim, efficient fingers travelled almost caressingly over the striped beast's head.

"A very ingenious murder," she murmured, "and an equally ingenious hiding-place for the instrument that achieved it."

Jasmine caught Inderwick's arm in a grip that made him wince. Weatherley stared in fascinated terror at the cool young woman kneeling by the tiger's head, her brilliant, inscrutable eyes studying Arnold Tressady, who was regarding her with that restrained ferocity which always caused knotted veins of passion to start out on his forehead.

"Come to the point," he bade thickly. "We have had enough of this mummery."

"We have indeed," the detective agreed. "You have not forgotten, Mr. Tressady, your wife's dying words, 'The tiger's eye!?' You stated to the coroner that you believed those words were spoken only in the delirium of her death agony. But you lied, Mr. Tressady. You knew very well the significance of those words. You knew that your wife was naming the mechanism by which she was poisoned—a diabolically clever mechanism, I grant you."

Arnold Tressady stood like one turned to stone. Only the burning intensity of his gaze told what he was suffering. Burton moved nearer, interposing his stalwart body between Tressady and the door.

Mercedes Quero, still with her eyes on Tressady,

passed her fingers down over the beast's muzzle and slipped them carefully, even cautiously, far into the snarling jaws behind the fang-like teeth.

"Watch out!" warned Burton, his voice sharp.

Miss Quero gave a soft little laugh of triumph.

"Just as safely hidden as the day Giovanni secreted it here!"

She drew forth—a little gingerly—from the cavernous mouth, a platinum finger ring set with a large brownish stone, through whose centre ran a lighter streak like the half-closed pupil of an animal's eye. The setting near the stone appeared unusually wide and thick and Mercedes Quero was careful not to touch this portion of the ring.

"The tiger's eye!" she said musingly. "A semi-precious stone, not especially rare, and generally quite harmless—but *not* in this instance."

She studied the horror-struck faces of the little circle of people about her, but it was on Arnold Tressady that her scrutiny once again rested.

"The poison ring of the Borgias," she commented, "revived to compass a modern crime. I shouldn't advise you to handle it, Inspector Burton," she warned as he attempted to take it from her. "There may still be poison left in the cavity behind the stone, and if you should accidentally press this tiny tip of steel, which is designed to simultaneously prick the skin and act as a lever opening the cavity

and releasing the poison, the *Purpurus Somnus* would be injected into your veins as it was into Genevra Tressady's."

She indicated a minute, barely visible projection, forming the almost infinitesimal point of a needle-like stiletto which coiled around the left inner side of the setting and connected with the cavity behind the stone. The coiled stiletto gave the appearance simply of a double border.

"If the ring is slipped gently on to the finger," continued Mercedes Quero, "this deadly little needle is felt only as a slight roughness in the setting, or possibly is not felt consciously at all, but if the ring is twisted about on the finger as is often done by a person when talking or thinking deeply, there is sure to be pressure on the lever, the skin is pricked, the cavity behind the stone opens and the poison flows through the needle into the veins of the intended victim. A ring of this sort was a favorite device with the Borgias to rid themselves of human obstacles in their path."

Jasmine hid her face on Inderwick's shoulder to shut out the sight of the deadly ring, and he, for his part, felt a wave of sickness come over him at thought of the malignancy of the brain that had contrived this mechanism, and then presented, or had it presented, to the unsuspecting victim. Undoubt-

edly, Ralph Tredgold shared the same thought and his face was set in stern, uncompromising lines.

"I think it is time now, Miss Quero," he said authoritatively, "for you to name the person whom you suspect to be my sister's slayer."

"You have put this case into my hands, Mr. Tredgold," she reminded him, "and so you must allow me to conduct it in the way that seems best to me. Before accusing any one, I wish to relate the manner in which I am convinced this ring was given to Genevra Tressady and soon after caused her death. Perhaps you can help me out in some of the details, Mr. Tressady?"

Her appeal was accompanied by a peculiarly searching look.

Arnold Tressady bore her scrutiny without flinching. The restrained fury in his eyes had given way to grim resolve and he held his powerful, grizzled head with a proud dignity that won Inderwick's admiration, if not Tredgold's as well.

"Perhaps I can do more than that, Miss Quero; perhaps I can supply some of the main incidents." Tressady's voice was calm, formal, slightly tinged with sarcasm.

Inderwick felt bewildered. The trend of events so far that evening, coupled with Mercedes Quero's continued side thrusts at Tressady, had inclined him to a growing distrust of this man who, in his in-

fatuation for Elfinella, had possibly more incentive than any one else for desiring Genevra Tressady's death. But now with Tressady's change of bearing, his suspicions weakened.

Could the coroner's jury be right after all in their verdict? Had Lawrence Trent, in spite of the apparent lack of motive, fashioned this ring with intent to kill his benefactress and then sent Elfinella, with the connivance of Giovanni, as the emissary of death? The suspicion was particularly unpleasant in view of Elfinella's relationship to Jasmine, and Inderwick endeavored to banish it as Mercedes Quero, after carefully placing the poison ring in a jewelry box, commenced her recital of events leading up to the murder.



## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE LABEL IN CIPHER

"To begin with," said Mercedes Quero, her gaze still singling out Arnold Tressady, "I must tell you that I had a short, but illuminating, interview with Mr. Trent before I came here. When he learned how much of the truth I had already discovered, he talked, and, Mr. Tressady, he talked to some purpose. I do not think that you will be required to do more than fill in certain details."

Tressady nodded curtly.

"Be good enough, Miss Quero, to come to the point. My patience is not inexhaustible."

"To come to the point then, Mr. Tressady," she flashed back, "you know that Lawrence Trent, at the request of Elfinella, had fashioned a ring—the tiger's eye ring—for your wife. Moreover, Elfinella was aware that Genevra Tressady was your wife. She was ambitious to shine as a theatrical 'star.' Your attentions not only flattered her, but she saw in you a means to reach the goal she was looking toward—naturally she regarded your wife, even though unacknowledged, as a formidable obstacle to her ambitions."

“You are misinformed, Miss Quero,” interrupted Arnold Tressady harshly, “Elfinella was not aware until the inquest to-day that Genevra Tressady was my wife. I know her well enough to be able to say positively that she would never have tolerated my attentions if she had had even a suspicion of the truth. She was very fond of my wife and intensely loyal to her, and she was puzzled and grieved over Genevra’s increasing coldness, the reason for which she was unable to understand.”

The detective smiled incredulously.

“No, Mr. Tressady, I must still maintain that Elfinella knew that your pseudo-sister was in reality your wife, and, consequently, she could not regard her other than a stumbling-block, not only to her career but to the continuance of your attentions which spelled for her the motor rides, the dinners and the lavish gifts which her luxury-loving little soul craved for.”

Jasmine suddenly intervened.

“Miss Quero, you are not to think such terrible things of my sister. I am sure Nell did not know that Genevra Tressady was Mr. Tressady’s wife, but even if she had, she is utterly incapable of even wishing to kill her. I don’t deny that Nell is frivolous and loves luxuries and is ambitious to become a famous dancer, but she is very tender-hearted as well

and loyal to her friends. She was grateful to Miss Tressady and very, very fond of her, too."

Mercedes Quero looked sympathetically at Jasmine's anxious face.

"I am sorry to be obliged to say what I am going to. But I must ask you not to interrupt me again. You will not help your sister by doing so."

"It is best to say nothing more now, Jas dear," advised Inderwick gently, as the detective resumed her account of events leading up to the murder.

Arnold Tressady, too, resigned himself to silence, but he was plainly chafing under the emotions he held in restraint—indignation, rage, apprehension, were mirrored in the depths of his steel-grey eyes.

"Elfinella," went on Mercedes Quero, "had learned through Mr. Trent of Giovanni Nullo's criminal past, and very possibly of Genevra Tressady's as well, although he denies having told her that. However, Elfinella knew of the Borgia poison ring which had achieved many murders when Luigi Dellarotti was directing his band of criminals, but had not apparently been employed by Angela Dellarotti when her father's leadership was bequeathed to her. Elfinella requisitioned Giovanni to aid her under threat of disclosing his identity to the police if he refused. His work consisted merely in procuring the poison—the *Purpurus Somnus*. Furthermore, Elfinella prevailed upon Trent to fashion a concealed

cavity and tiny spring behind the setting of the ring, telling him that the cavity was to hold some perfume of which Miss Tressady was fond. Trent was unsuspecting and did as Elfinella requested.

“She showed you this ring, Mr. Tressady, when you lunched together at the *Café du Bon Diable* on June nineteenth, the day of the murder. But the poison had not then been put in—Giovanni had it here at the Lodge. When she called, he gave it to her and she inserted it in the cavity of the ring by means of a small medicine dropper. Then she came upstairs to this study and presented the ring to Genevra Tressady.

“Elfinella alone planned the murder and, with the exception of Giovanni’s enforced assistance in procuring the poison, she carried it out alone. Trent can in no way be regarded as an accomplice for, although he fashioned the ring, he was ignorant of the purpose to which it was to be put and, moreover, he did not call here that day—he lied upon this point in order to shield Elfinella.”

Jasmine was now almost in a state of collapse.

“It is not true!” she protested. “Nella could not have done this.”

Weatherley was staring in horrified amazement at the self-possessed young woman so coolly describing the details of a peculiarly treacherous murder.

“If you please, Miss,” she faltered, rising to her

feet, "I'm wanting to get away to my own room. Anything so cold-blooded like as this, I can't bear to listen to, and, especially, when I was that fond of Miss Tressady, poor soul!"

"I am sorry, Weatherley," refused the detective. "but I cannot permit any one to leave now."

Weatherley sank back unhappily in her chair.

"I'll not believe it of Miss Nella," she declared. "She was always that sweet-natured and kind."

Ralph Tredgold, as he looked at the white-faced housekeeper and at Jasmine, half-fainting in Inderwick's support, wore an expression of grave concern.

"Of course, Miss Quero, I wish at any cost to have the person who killed my sister brought to justice, but—you are making serious accusations, against a young woman whom I, too, can hardly believe guilty of such a crime. You are quite certain of your facts?"

"I am quite certain, at least, Mr. Tredgold, that I can present evidence to substantiate every statement I have made. Lawrence Trent realized the strength of the evidence I am prepared to produce or he would not have withdrawn the chivalrous lie he told to shield Elfinella."

Her scrutiny continued to rest upon Arnold Tressady with a curious, challenging insistence.

His own eyes narrowed as they encountered hers.

"Trent is a cad to withdraw that statement at this stage—whether a lie or not."

"Hanging is not a pleasant fate for any man to contemplate," insinuated the detective gently.

"But Trent is cur enough to abandon the woman he pretends to love to such a fate," said Tressady hotly.

"Not precisely that, Mr. Tressady," her tone still gently insinuating, "but when I set before him the result of my investigations, he realized then, as he had not done before, that nothing now could save Elfinella. My case against her is a clear one, every link in the chain closing about her is complete. It only remains for me to join these links. His chivalrous lie of having come here to the Lodge no longer carries weight—I have discovered two witnesses who can swear that Trent was at the Hotel Napoli in Soho from three o'clock until four-thirty on the afternoon of June the nineteenth, negotiating a sale of jewelry with a wealthy Italian merchant. Elfinella's guilt is certain in any case. Why should Trent persist in a useless lie?"

Arnold Tressady replied by another question.

"Why could not Trent himself have put the poison in the ring before giving it to Elfinella?"

"He had no incentive for killing your wife, Mr. Tressady. Elfinella had. Moreover, Giovanni Nullo will testify at the trial that, under compulsion,

he procured the poison for Elfinella and saw her drop it into the ring in the library here, while he guarded the door to see that no one entered."

Tressady's lips twisted in a cold, derisive smile.

"If Giovanni Nullo ventures to give this testimony at the trial, he will be in a fair way to convict himself. He is a notorious criminal and he will admit that he had in his possession on the afternoon of the nineteenth, the poison that killed my wife, and the ring, too, easily within his grasp."

"Ah, but consider, Mr. Tressady," there was an allusive softness in the detective's voice, "Giovanni, like Trent, had no recognized incentive, while Elfinella had a very powerful one. Furthermore, it was she who caused the ring to be made, and it is known, on her own admission as well as by the testimony of others, that she was closeted alone in this study with Genevra Tressady between approximately three-thirty and a quarter to four on June nineteenth. Shortly after four o'clock, your wife was found dying of poison injected into the veins of her fingers by means of this tiger's eye ring presented to her by Elfinella, and her dying cries of reproach, as echoed by her pet macaw—which, I am convinced you yourself made way with to prevent the repetition of these cries—were 'Nella, Nella, Elfinella.' No, Mr. Tressady, I do not think that the jury will find Giovanni guilty. You see, there is no proof or in-

dication that, from the time Trent gave the ring to Elfinella and she presented it to your wife, it came into other hands than hers, unless——”

Mercedes Quero paused and stole one of her curious, sidelong glances at Tressady.

“Unless?” he demanded sharply.

“Unless,” the detective completed in notably sweet tones, “we believe that Monsieur Bartot of the *Café du Bon Diable* was mistaken in saying that you refused to look at the gift which Elfinella intended for your wife and which she wished to show you at luncheon that day. Monsieur Bartot was called from the room a few minutes. Possibly you changed your mind then, and—inspected—the gift, the tiger’s eye ring, as we now know that it was?”

Tressady’s heavy brows drew together. His eyes burned into those of the young woman confronting him with a half smile on her lips.

“Suppose I did—inspect—this ring. What then, Miss Quero?”

She continued to smile.

“Then, Mr. Tressady, we should know that Elfinella was not the only person who handled this ring from the time Trent gave it to her until it was slipped on your wife’s finger.”

“That would alter the case against Elfinella?”

“Materially, Mr. Tressady.”

“But what about Giovanni’s testimony?”



"It would lose weight," she replied, still smiling. Arnold Tressady swallowed convulsively. His massive, grizzled head drooped.

"I don't fancy I've much left to live for," he said thickly, with a bitter look at Ralph Tredgold. "Now that my marriage to a woman of criminal past is known, I am shamed before the world, the old family name of which I have every right to be proud is disgraced through this marriage; there is no one to care greatly what comes to me—and, I thank God, there is not. Youth is behind me—I am getting on in years. But Elfinella is young, she has the future before her, there are many to care what comes to her, this fiddling Trent loves her, and she loves him, always has. I've been an infatuated ass over her, but my life has not been a happy one, and she flashed across it like some joyous, golden vision of vanished youth. I wanted her for my own—at any price. My wife was the stumbling-block. I decided that I was justified in removing her—she had made a tragedy of my life. So—as you see—I did remove her."

He stopped abruptly, avoiding the horrified eyes of all, especially those of Ralph Tredgold.

Inspector Burton had drawn out his little memorandum and was jotting down rapid notes. The figures of two burly constables loomed in the hallway beyond.

Mercedes Quero was staring in a curious, appraising fashion at the self-accused man. One might have fancied there was something of admiration in her look.

"But I don't quite see, Mr. Tressady, how you did contrive this—removal."

"It is not a thing I care to talk about," he said curtly. "I knew that Elfinella was having a ring made for my wife with a cavity behind the setting designed to hold perfume. I had heard of the poison ring used by Dellarotti's band of criminals and I saw that this could be employed in the same way. Giovanni lied in saying that he procured the poison for Elfinella. He procured it for me. I inserted it in the ring by means of a medicine dropper while Monsieur Bartot was absent from the room. Elfinella understood that I was dropping some sort of perfume into the cavity. She carried the ring to my wife in perfect good faith."

"Elfinella must have thought this supposed perfume had rather an unpleasant fragrance," suggested the detective softly. "The *Purpureus Somnus* emits a decidedly pungent odor."

Tressady shot her a furious glance from under his frowning brows. He either scorned or was unable to find any reply.

"Where did Giovanni procure this poison?" she questioned next.

Tressady stiffened with impatience. "At some chemist's shop—near the Follies' Theatre, I believe."

"At Barclay's?" she queried gently.

"Yes, at Barclay's," he snapped out.

Mercedes Quero shook her head and smiled.

"Oh, no, he did not, Mr. Tressady. There is no chemist's shop in all London—or England either—which carries the *Purpurus Somnus*. That poison is of private manufacture."

Tressady compressed his lips.

"I do not intend to incriminate the maker of it by naming him."

The detective surveyed him with what now seemed genuine puzzlement.

"If you really do know the distiller of this poison, it will be best for you to name him."

"I am no longer considering myself."

"I know you are not," there came a sympathetic note into the detective's voice, "but nevertheless you are doing your best to defeat justice."

"On the contrary," said Tressady haughtily, "I have admitted that I am guilty."

Miss Quero came a step nearer.

"Are you guilty also of the death of Helen Martin, the seamstress and missing witness?"

Tressady's eyes narrowed.

"Why do you ask me that?"

"It appears from the surface evidence," said the

detective slowly, "that Helen Martin was removed from this world because she was a witness in possession of incriminating evidence against the slayer of her employer. Now, as she, too, died from the poison known as the Purple Sleep, it has been assumed that the same person was responsible for both deaths. That is the opinion held by Scotland Yard, is it not, Inspector Burton?"

"It is, Miss Quero," that official answered emphatically, "and a sound opinion we consider it, too."

Mercedes Quero permitted herself a slight smile.

"You hear the pronouncement of Scotland Yard, Mr. Tressady. If you are guilty of one death, you must be of the other. You admit the logic of this?"

Arnold Tressady reflected an appreciable while before replying. Finally he said, "The judgment of Scotland Yard is logical, certainly."

Burton pressed closer, the zeal of the police bloodhound lighting his keen, hard eyes.

"You admit your guilt then?"

Tressady bestowed on him a glance of cold contempt.

"I do not deny it."

Burton impatiently fingered a pair of stout manacles he had drawn from his pocket.

"How about it, Miss Quero? No occasion for delay. The case is plain as a pikestaff now."

She gave a little mocking laugh.

"You have changed your views, my dear Inspector, since this afternoon when you expressed satisfaction at the verdict of the coroner's jury."

Burton scowled.

"There have been new developments since then. I am always open to conviction."

"So am I," she smiled back, "but I do not change my convictions without definite proof. Now, Mr. Tressady, since by your own admission you sent Helen Martin into the silence of the Purple Sleep, will you be kind enough to decipher for us the very interesting hieroglyphic label on this box which I found upon the bureau in the room where she died?"

Mercedes Quero held out to him a small, rectangular pasteboard box on which was boldly and clearly printed in ink:

M  
 3. 4: 123  
 3. 4: ----- 34  
 4. 1: ----- 84  
 X

Inderwick remembered the marked interest she had displayed in this box and how she had drawn from it a quantity of paper shavings.

Arnold Tressady took the box and studied the label in frowning puzzlement.

"I can make nothing of this meaningless jumble."

"But you should, Mr. Tressady," the detective

viewed him speculatively, "for the vial containing the poison which killed Helen Martin was enclosed in this pasteboard box, and on it the person who sent the poison printed these letters and figures which, by the way, are not a meaningless jumble but very definite and sinister instructions which this missing witness obeyed when she swallowed the *Purpurus Somnus*."

"Then her death was equivalent to suicide," declared Tressady, taken off his guard.

The detective smiled in triumph.

"Enforced suicide, Mr. Tressady, and I fear that many of your statements this evening have been nothing short of perjury, but well-intentioned perjury, I know. I want to thank you for convincing me that you were not even implicated in your wife's death. I shall have to admit I had my doubts, and I want to apologize. You have been splendid tonight—splendid!" She impulsively held out her hand.

Arnold Tressady surveyed her surprisedly, hesitated, then gripped her hand.

"But Elfinella?" his voice deep with emotion.

The detective gave his hand a reassuring pressure.

"Don't worry, Mr. Tressady. Before morning, Elfinella will be free. My accusations against her and against Giovanni were only tests to draw you out—to see just how far you were implicated, if at all.

I am very sorry indeed to have harrowed up everybody as I have and I do not blame any one for feeling indignant toward me, but I had to do it to settle my own doubts. Now let me say a word in fairness to Lawrence Trent. He did not withdraw his chivalrous lie of having called here on the afternoon of June nineteenth, even when I confronted him with evidence proving that he was at the Hotel Napoli at the time. Miss Holland," turning with sudden appeal to Jasmine, "say that; you forgive me for making you so unhappy this evening."

The gypsy color was coming back to Jasmine's cheeks and she contrived to smile, though a little wanly.

"You have made such amends, that I shall have to forgive you."

Ralph Tredgold, an immense relief on his grave, ascetic face, turned to Tressady.

"I should like to apologize, too, for having doubted you."

Tressady appeared both surprised and somewhat moved by this overture, although he ignored his brother-in-law's proffered hand.

"Very well," he said stiffly, "I accept your apology. I daresay under the circumstances you were justified in suspecting me."

Inspector Burton, with a reluctant air, returned the manacles to his pocket.

"I'm dashed, Miss Quero, if I see much progress you have made to-night."

Her eyes as they met Burton's disgruntled gaze were dark and intensely bright.

"Come with me then to the offices of Mr. Hildreth Revelstoke, and I think you will not complain that I have made no progress. Late as it is, I know that he will be there, for I telephoned and made an appointment before coming here, and two friends of mine, in *our* profession, Inspector Burton, who happen to be on duty to-night as hall-men in the Twentieth Century Building would let me know if Mr. Revelstoke were not still in his office."

"Hildreth Revelstoke! What the devil do you mean?" exploded Burton. "What sort of a card do you think you have up your sleeve now?"

"I fancy," she answered composedly, "that this time it is a trump card."



## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE PURPLE SLEEP

INDERWICK and Tredgold had been invited to accompany the two detectives to the offices of Hildreth Revelstoke. As Inderwick stepped once more into the handsomely appointed reception-room of the millionaire clubman and theatrical magnate, he was conscious of a thrill of intense curiosity and excitement. How should Revelstoke be involved in the treacherous murder of the woman he had loved? True, he had had an unpleasant scene with her on the evening preceding her death when she had confessed to him that she was Tressady's wife, but in the morning he had called to offer his apologies and, according to his own statement at the inquest—a statement that had held the ring of sincerity—although she had refused to see him, his love for her had continued unchanged.

The four callers were not kept waiting long, but were ushered with little delay into the dramatic producer's private office. The first object that met their view with rather startling effect was the full-length oil-painting of Genevra Tressady which hung

above the carved mantel of the massive, open fireplace. An electric bulb directly over the portrait lighted up the golden glints in the masses of her hair, deepened the brown of her eyes, and made the noble beauty of her form in its draped evening gown of soft blue satin stand forth against the vista of misty parkland over which the artist had depicted her as gazing.

On the rich Oriental carpet covering the centre of the waxed floor, stood Hildreth Reveltsoke, studying with grave intensity the fair, pictured face of her whom he had loved. With his usual calm courtesy he turned to greet his visitors, and Inderwick, for his part, was shocked by the change that had taken place in his appearance during the few hours elapsing since the close of the inquest. It seemed as though some withering force had laid its devastating hand upon him. His handsome features were drawn and haggard, lines, as deep as scars, showed at the sides of his eyes, the curve of his sensitive mouth had altered and hardened, even his tall, fine figure appeared slightly stooped and shrunken. He looked now like a man in the middle fifties instead of the early forties. But the change that had come over him, marked though it was, seemed physical rather than spiritual, for his eyes remained clear and undimmed, possibly of somewhat fevered brilliance, but tranquil and fearless, and the tones of his voice

as he addressed Mercedes Quero held their customary composed, mellow quality.

"I have been waiting for you, Miss Quero," he said.

With quiet courtesy he brought forward for her an easy chair of delicately carved oak and indicated other chairs for the three men whom he greeted with the same calm politeness.

"Did my telephone this evening surprise you, Mr. Revelstoke?" asked Mercedes Quero, as she seated herself in the chair he placed for her.

"Frankly it did not, Miss Quero, but I must confess it made me a bit curious to learn just how much of the truth you knew or suspected."

Revelstoke remained standing by the writing-table, still the perfect type of the well-bred, self-possessed gentleman, entirely master of his emotions, a faint, interrogative smile on his lips as he looked down at the detective, but he leaned, a little more heavily, perhaps, than ease of manner alone necessitated against the stout, oak table.

"You are such a clever follower-up of hidden clues, Miss Quero, that I should hardly have been surprised had you called upon me prior to the inquiry. But tell me, if you will pardon my curiosity, what loose thread it was that has brought you so directly to me?"

"This is the thread, Mr. Revelstoke." Mercedes

Quero held out to him, as she had done to Arnold Tressady, the small, rectangular pasteboard box which she had found upon the bureau in the room where the little seamstress had died. "I think that you will be able to decipher this hieroglyphic label, will you not? It relates—most elucidatingly—to the vial of poison which this box contained and from which Helen Martin drank the purple draught that sealed her lips forever."

There was much of admiration now in Hildreth Revelstoke's deepening smile.

"Clever, Miss Quero, very clever! But since you find this label so elucidating, will *you* not decipher it for me?"

The detective smiled in return.

"With pleasure, Mr. Revelstoke, on condition that you correct me if I make a slip-up. May I trouble you to pass me that copy of 'Macbeth'?"

She indicated a pocket-edition book bound in red limp leather which stood, supported with others of its kind between griffins fashioned of jade bronze, on the mantel below the portrait of Genevra Tressady. Inderwick remembered how the detective had taken from a table at the foot of Helen Martin's bed a similar copy of "Macbeth," together with one of "Richard III," both copies worn and dog-eared.

The theatrical producer, with a slightly ironic bow, passed the desired book to Mercedes Quero.

"So you, too, are a student of Shakespeare?"

"For the past few days," she said challengingly, "all my interest has centred in this, perhaps his greatest tragedy—Macbeth."

Revelstoke gave the cool young woman a long, searching scrutiny.

"I believe," he declared with conviction, "that your studies have brought you to the heart of the tragedy. I shall be glad if you will decipher this hieroglyphic label in the light of what 'Macbeth' has taught you. You will permit me to sit down also?"

His features slightly contracted and he sank rather suddenly into the depths of a Morocco chair facing the detective.

Mercedes Quero looked at him with concern.

"You are ill, Mr. Revelstoke?"

He made a deprecating gesture.

"Just a momentary dizziness. It will soon be over. Please, Miss Quero, let us hear the result of your studies in 'Macbeth.'"

The detective took the small pasteboard box and held it so that Burton and Inderwick could see its cipher label:

|       |       |    |
|-------|-------|----|
|       | M     |    |
| 3. 4: | 123   |    |
| 3. 4: | ----- | 34 |
| 4. 1: | ----- | 84 |
|       | X     |    |

"A very simple cipher indeed," she said. "The moment I saw those dog-eared, penciled copies of 'Macbeth' and 'Richard III' on Helen Martin's little table I knew they had some special significance, for Shakespeare's tragedies are not ordinarily the handbook of a humble seamstress. I was seeking a key to the cipher label and I felt convinced that one of these two much-consulted plays constituted the key. This M at the top of the cipher of course showed me to which play I must turn."

She opened the copy of "Macbeth," one slender finger following the first line of the cipher: 3. 4: 123.

She turned to Act 3, Scene 4, line 123 and read:

"'It will have blood: they say blood will have blood.'"

Mercedes Quero followed on, in accordance with the ciphered directions:—3. 4: - - - - - 34—turned to line 34 of the same act and scene, and skipping the first six words corresponding to the six dashes, read:

"'The feast is sold.'"

Then, following the final line of the label: 4. 1: - - - - - 84, she turned to Act 4, Scene 1, line 84, and again skipping the first six words, read:

"'Thou shalt not live.'"

"This sinister message is signed X," observed the detective softly, and cast at Burton a glance of significance.

"X!" he repeated with a frown of puzzlement.  
"X!"

Suddenly a light broke over his face.

"Great Scott! Miss Quero, and X was the pseudonym used by Angela Dellarotti's right hand man, the English crook who always went masked, was the chemist of the gang, distilled their devilish purple poison, defied the police at every turn, and then vanished into thin air when the band was broken up, leaving no trace behind him except the decomposed body of his girl, Madge Baylis, floating in the river off Limehouse."

Hildreth Revelstoke was leaning back with nonchalant ease in the cushioned depths of the Morocco chair, an impersonal smile of admiration on his lips.

"Very clever, Miss Quero!" he remarked again.

"Thank you," she flashed in response, "I always appreciate a generous adversary. Inspector Burton, Mr. Inderwick, and Mr. Tredgold, allow me to present you to the distinguished gentleman, formerly known as X, the first lieutenant and partner in crime of Angela Dellarotti, whom we know best as Geneva Tressady. Mr. Revelstoke, 'the feast is sold' indeed."

"I regret it less since so clever and charming a lady is the purchaser," he replied with unruffled courtesy. "Now, Inspector Burton," as that official

arose and pressed nearer, a glint of steel showing in his hand, "don't be in such haste to ring down the final curtain. I have a few things I want to say, before it is too late. I shall not evaporate into thin air this time. It would be useless, for I realize that the dénouement has come. I ask only the favor of being allowed to occupy the centre of the stage for a few minutes longer—then you can do with me as you see fit."

"Let him say what he wishes to, Inspector Burton," advised Mercedes Quero. "There are still a few odd threads that perhaps he will untangle for us."

Revelstoke smiled again, but a little painfully now, and his fingers gripped the arms of his chair as though he suffered some sharp physical pang.

"I should like to oblige you, my dear young lady, but I have really very little time left before the final curtain rings down. You see, when I received your telephone this evening I knew that the feast was sold. Now I have never had a fancy for English jails nor for any other jails for that matter, so, from that time until your arrival here, I have been drinking graduated doses of my own private distillation, the famed *Purpurus Somnus*, and sleep will come upon me in a very few minutes now."

With a visible effort, he moved his chair so that it fronted the portrait of Genevra Tressady.



"I should like," he said weakly, "to have her dear face the last object my eyes shall rest on. I loved her, and she was the only woman I ever have loved. She refused always to regard me as anything more than a business associate whose masked features she did not even desire to see. But when she made up her mind to reform and went away with her brother, I determined to reform also, as she had expressed a wish that I should do. It was my intention to seek her out and to try to win her love as an honorable man.

"But I lost trace of her for several years, during which I became interested and successful in the theatrical business. I never forgot Angela nor ceased hoping that I should meet her again, some day. Finally, some four years ago, I did meet her in my capacity as dramatic producer. Under the name of Geneva Tressady, she was just coming into prominence as a successful playwright. She had no idea who I was, for she had never seen my face and had long since forgotten my voice. In my courtship of Angela, I became an intimate friend of Arnold Tressady whom I naturally supposed to be that brother who had persuaded her to reform and to go away with him. As time went on, Tressady actively encouraged my courtship of Angela, in order, as I know now, to divert her attention from his infatuation for Elfinella who seems to have be-

witched him from the moment she danced across his path.

“When Angela finally told me in the last interview I had with her, that she was in reality the wife of Tressady and that she loved him, even idolized him, in spite of the neglect and other cruelties which the inappreciative ass treated her to, I was crazed with grief and indignation. I told her that I knew the secret of her past and that I was X, her partner in crime, and implored her to leave Tressady and come away with me. But she dismissed me without hope—she loved Tressady and there could be no other man in her life. When I called in the morning to apologize for my violence of the evening before, she refused to see me. Life has held nothing for me since.”

Revelstoke's voice broke in a gasping sob. His features contracted in sudden agony, a purplish hue tinged his cheeks. He pulled himself to his feet, his filming eyes searching the lovely, pictured face above him.

“I am coming to you soon, Angela!”

A severer spasm shook his frame and he fell back heavily into the chair.

“Miss Quero and gentlemen,” he gasped, his swollen lips contriving an apologetic smile, “I must beg you to excuse me—I can tell you no more—the Purple Sleep has come upon me.”



“I AM COMING TO YOU SOON, ANGELA”



## CHAPTER XXVIII

### A QUESTION OF IDENTITY

INSPECTOR BURTON turned at once to the nickel-plated telephone on the writing-table and rang up first Scotland Yard and then the coroner's office.

"A bad job ended," he said with callous satisfaction, as he hung up the receiver. "It's been a devilish nasty case from start to finish. I dare say you don't mind letting go a bit now, Miss Quero. What put you wise in the first place to Revelstoke being X?"

Mercedes Quero laid a handkerchief over the dead man's face before replying.

"I looked up his personal history and drew deductions from it. You know I always make it a point at the very outset to investigate the past of every person even remotely connected with a mystery case. Such investigations often yield a very rich harvest. They certainly did in the matter of Hildreth Revelstoke. I learned that this was his real name, that he came of a substantial old Kentish family, that through the death of his parents he had come, while still a boy, into the possession of a large

patrimony which he had squandered in riotous living while at Cambridge where, nevertheless, he took honors in chemistry. After leaving the university with his money practically gone, he came to London and settled in cheap lodgings in Bloomsbury, consorting with the lower class of theatrical people and the demi-monde in general.

“Then, about two years later, his fortunes took a surprising upward trend. He removed to a luxurious flat in Mayfair, entered the most exclusive clubs on the strength of his family connections, and appeared to be supplied with unlimited funds. His manners were irreproachable, his friends now of the best, and he moved in the most aristocratic circles. But the source of his suddenly acquired wealth always remained a mystery as did certain characteristics of the man himself. For instance, there would be periods of several days’ duration in which he would refuse all invitations and deny himself to all callers. His excuses for this seclusion varied from business to attacks of illness.

“But on one of these periods of seclusion, he was discovered during a police raid apparently living as a lodger in one of the back rooms of a low tavern in Limehouse—The Golden Lion, by name. This place, as you know, was noted as being the rendezvous of crooks and social outcasts of all degrees. It was run by John Baylis who was suspected

of acting as fence for the Dellarotti band of criminals. This man, you remember, was, moreover, the father of Madge Baylis, X's young woman, who saved him many times from the police at the risk of her own arrest.

“Revelstoke contrived to satisfy the police with some plausible explanation for his being at this tavern—no doubt money helped to satisfy them—and the matter was hushed up. Revelstoke returned to Mayfair and to his aristocratic friends, but his dual life with its periodic seclusions continued up to about ten years ago—at approximately the date, Inspector Burton, when the Dellarotti gang ceased operations. From then on, Hildreth Revelstoke was accessible to his friends at all times and his source of income ceased to be a matter of mystery. He threw himself whole-heartedly into the business side of theatrical life and soon became a highly successful and enormously wealthy dramatic producer.

“Now, as soon as I had in my possession these significant side-lights on Hildreth Revelstoke's life, I secretly gained admittance one evening, as I told you, to these offices and here I stumbled upon a wealth of information.”

“You mean,” interrupted Burton, evidently feeling that he had been a silent listener too long for the dignity of Scotland Yard, “that you saw this paint-

ing of Genevra Tressady which enabled you to identify her with Angela Dellarotti?"

Mercedes Quero nodded.

"That portrait was a fortunate discovery, for I, as well as the police and the press, had been puzzled and baffled by the fact that there were no existing pictures of Genevra Tressady to be found. I distrusted the excuse given out by Miss Tressady and her friends that she declined to have her portrait taken because she disliked notoriety. It is a perfectly natural and pardonable vanity in a woman as beautiful as she was reputed to be, to wish to see her features reproduced, and one of my strongest reasons for coming here that night was because I had learned through a friend of hers that she had yielded to an earnest request made by Revelstoke, and had allowed a protégé of his, a young Spanish artist, to paint her portrait for him on condition that he would hang it only in his private office and allow no reproductions to be made of it. So, as my suspicions were aroused, I was not entirely surprised to discover that the original of this painting was the beautiful criminal, Angela Dellarotti, sought so long and so vainly by the police of this country and the continent. Of course this discovery confirmed my belief that Revelstoke was X. I also made an even more conclusive discovery here."

She approached the massive fireplace as she



spoke. Burton, Tredgold, and Inderwick followed her movements with intense interest. Her fingers strayed searchingly over the carved mantel, ornate with scrolls and panels. With unerring touch, she pushed one of the panels to the side. It moved easily, revealing a small brass knob.

Burton, with the zeal of a bloodhound, sprang forward, Mercedes Quero twisted and turned the knob. It moved, but at first nothing seemed to happen, then, ascertaining the trouble, she pushed the knob vigorously to one side, and the whole mantel swung loose from the wall almost a foot, disclosing a cavernous space beyond. She pulled the mantel-door wide open, and, stepping inside, switched on a swinging electric light.

The sudden illumination revealed a compact, but fully-equipped, chemical laboratory. Bottles and tubes of various colored liquids, together with distilling apparatus, pestles, and varied chemical utensils stood on the glass shelves which ran along three sides of the narrow rectangular chamber. On a glass-topped table rested a crystal bowl, half-filled with purplish fluid.

"X's hidden laboratory," exclaimed Mercedes Quero, "where the poison that killed Genevra Tres-sady was distilled."

"That fact is plain as a pikestaff," conceded Burton, "but I'm dashed if I see how you have proved

that Revelstoke, or X as we now know him to have been, was the one who put the poison into the tiger's eye ring."

"I have not proved it," she admitted, "for the simple reason that it cannot be proved."

Burton's eyes lighted with shrewd calculation. "You mean then——"

"That Revelstoke did not put the *Purpurus Somnus* into the ring," she completed. "He had no intentional share in the poisoning of the woman he loved. But he did poison, or, to be exact, he caused Helen Martin to poison herself. Can you surmise why, Inspector Burton?"

He stared at her, puzzled and frowning.

"To seal the seamstress's lips, I suppose. She was wanted as a material witness."

Mercedes Quero shook her head.

"Not as a witness of any crime of his against Genevra Tressady. I assure you that Revelstoke was entirely innocent in that matter. But if you consider the cipher message which he sent to Helen Martin, can you not deduce the reason for his commanding her to die? Listen again to this message:

'It will have blood; they say blood will have blood.

The feast is sold.

Thou shalt not live.'"

Burton gripped the sides of the glass-topped table

as the significance of these words slowly burned into his brain.

“By George!” he cried. “Helen Martin!”

“It must be, you see, Inspector Burton.”

“But why,” he demanded, not even now entirely convinced, “why should she kill her benefactress?”

Mercedes Quero replied by another question.

“Have you investigated Helen Martin’s past life? Let me recall to you again the little Cockney girl of Limehouse, X’s young woman, who acted as fence for him.”

“Madge Baylis! But she was fished out of the river at Limehouse three months after the Dellarotti gang broke up—dead as a drowned rat.”

Mercedes Quero smiled a disavowal.

“The corpse that was drawn out of the river and assumed to be that of Madge Baylis was so badly decomposed that absolute identification was impossible. The dead woman, it is true, corresponded in height, size, and the color of her hair to Madge Baylis who had disappeared at about the same time that this poor body must have entered the water, according to the medical examiner; but the identification of the body as that of Madge Baylis was purely assumption.”

The detective opened her handbag.

“Here is a picture of Madge Baylis taken thirteen or fourteen years ago—you have a duplicate of

it in your portrait gallery in the Criminal Investigation Department. Compare it with this picture of Helen Martin taken at the morgue where she still lies. Allowing for the changes made by the passage of years, ill-fortune and unhappiness, don't you see that these two pictures represent one and the same person?"

Burton studied the portraits with scowling eagerness.

"It's Madge Baylis without a doubt," he decided.

"And this," said Mercedes Quero, handing him the blurred and faded snapshot which she had removed from the old-fashioned cameo locket that she had found tucked away in an inner pocket of Helen Martin's shabby travelling-bag, "is, I think, a picture of Madge Baylis and X taken years ago while they were on some holiday together."

"Can't make much out of that blur, Miss Quero," grunted Burton, after a sharp scrutiny of the snapshot which depicted a man and a girl standing together in lover-like attitude on some shadowy beach.

"Not the faces," she admitted, "but the figures are clear enough. See, the girl is small, as we know Madge Baylis was, and the man tall and finely-built, like Revelstoke."

"Oh, I daresay it's they, right enough," Burton conceded, "and taken in the days before X threw

her over as he seems to have done. I say, Miss Quero, there we have the motive—jealousy—plain as a pikestaff!”

Burton spoke as jubilantly as though every clue and its deduction thus far had been of his own discovering.

Mercedes Quero shot at him an amused, side-long glance.

“You are *so* discerning, dear Inspector Burton.”

Burton’s jaw set hard.

“I’m not denying your cleverness, Miss Quero, but there’s still a lot of loose threads for you to gather up. You’ve jumped devilish high at some of your conclusions.”

Her eyes, still amused, held no rancor. “Be patient! I shall gather up all the threads in just a few minutes. I think I hear your chief and the coroner in the outer office now. Please ask them to step in here.”

## CHAPTER XXIX

### GATHERED THREADS

AFTER the coroner and the Chief of the Criminal Investigation Department had made an examination of Revelstoke's body and the concealed laboratory, Mercedes Quero proceeded to gather up for them the remaining threads of the mystery.

"In the first place," she began, "I will tell you now exactly what Lawrence Trent divulged to me this evening when I interviewed him in his cell before I went to Pomander Lodge. I shall have to admit that I gave Mr. Tressady a garbled and very incomplete account of this interview, but I did so in order to test him because I did not feel entirely certain that he was not implicated to some degree, at least, in his wife's death. I told Trent I had discovered that Helen Martin was Madge Baylis and that he must tell all he knew about this woman and her possible connection with Genevra Tressady's murder if he wished to clear Elfinella and himself. He saw now the necessity for doing so and acknowledged that he had known the identity of Madge Baylis, even before she had been employed as seamstress by Miss Tressady.

“He told me, furthermore, that he had known Miss Tressady’s identity for about the same period of time. He discovered it when she came behind the scenes at the Follies’ Theatre on the evening of its opening and Mr. Revelstoke—whom he did not know to be X until after the murder—introduced him to her. Although Trent had never been actively associated in his father’s dealings with the Dellarotti band, he had met the principal members of it, and immediately recognized Miss Tressady as Angela Dellarotti. She also recognized him and, learning his address, called upon him at his lapidary shop the next morning. They agreed, of course, to keep each other’s secret, she showed interest in his musical ambitions and from that time on tried, in every way, to aid his advancement. Trent’s sentiments toward her were those of gratitude and devotion. Revelstoke, who knew Trent to be the son of old Trentini, also tried to advance him.

“It was about this time that Revelstoke installed Madge Baylis, under the name of Helen Martin, as mender of costumes and properties at the Follies’ Theatre. Trent came only gradually to recognize her—for she had changed greatly. She had wasted her health and former prettiness by the use of drugs and the feverish life of gambling dens, where she had lost whatever money had come to her through the operations of the Dellarotti band. It was notice-

able that she was infatuated with Revelstoke and, at the same time, had some hold over him which chafed him, but which he dared not repudiate. Still, it did not occur to Trent to associate Revelstoke, the man of impregnable social position with the masked criminal, X, her former lover.

“Madge Baylis and Genevra Tressady met in the property room one day and recognized each other. Madge, for some reason best known to herself, probably in order to spy upon Revelstoke’s courtship of Genevra of whom she was bitterly jealous, persuaded, or perhaps, forced Miss Tressady to engage her as seamstress. Madge succeeded in giving the impression at Pomander Lodge that she was a hard-working unfortunate, much abused by fate, and that she was devoted to Miss Tressady. In reality, Madge Baylis was a malignant little creature, the only soft spot in her nature being her love for Revelstoke who had years ago tired of her Cockney prettiness, her jealousies and her tempers.

“Of course, she knew the identity of Giovanni Nullo, ‘The Tiger,’ now butler at the Lodge, and used this knowledge to her own financial advantage, for she still spent her evenings in gambling dens and Revelstoke refused to allow her money for this purpose, evidently counting on the fact that her love for him would prevent her from denouncing him to



the police, as she often threatened to do in the case of Giovanni.

“Matters finally came to the point where Madge, like every one else, expected that Revelstoke would soon marry Genevra Tressady. She became maddened by jealousy and had a violent scene with Revelstoke in the property room one day. All her energies now were bent on destroying her rival. She had learned that Elfinella, whose sympathies she had aroused by her apparent friendlessness and ill-fortune, planned to give some gift of jewelry to Miss Tressady, so Madge suggested a ring fashioned with a cavity for holding perfume. Elfinella innocently accepted the suggestion and Trent as innocently followed it out, not then knowing the author of the suggestion.

“Madge either had some of the *Purpureus Somnus* in her possession or stole it from Revelstoke’s laboratory, the existence of which she undoubtedly knew of as she was in the habit of visiting his offices, although he had forbidden her to do so as Trent had once overheard. Madge had offered to supply some rare Arabian perfume to put in the ring, and so Elfinella called at her lodgings in Pond Street on June the nineteenth before lunching with Mr. Tressady. There Madge Baylis, using a small medicine dropper, inserted the poison into the ring, caution-

ing Elfinella to handle it as little as possible if she would keep the perfume intact.

“Elfinella, in happy innocence, after lunching with Mr. Tressady, went to Pomander Lodge and presented the ring to Genevra Tressady who accepted the gift in the friendly spirit in which it was offered. Elfinella left the study rejoicing because Miss Tressady’s recent coldness toward her was apparently at an end. As she descended the stairs, she heard Miss Tressady locking the door of the study on the inside. Before she reached the lower hall, she heard dreadful cries from that locked room, cries of agony and reproach declaring that she had been poisoned by the ring.

“We can surmise what had happened. Elfinella had slipped the ring so gently upon Miss Tressady’s finger that the tiny lever controlling the cavity which held the poison had not been disturbed, but while Miss Tressady was in the act of locking the door, as she often did to secure privacy when at work on her plays, she must have pressed upon the dagger-like lever which pricked her skin and at the same time released the poison. In her frantic efforts to tear off the ring which, of course, she now knew to be a replica of the poison ring of the Borgias, she caused those lacerations which were observed on her fingers and by means of which the *Purpurus Somnus* rapidly entered her veins.

Elfinella did not comprehend Miss Tressady's accusations; she understood only that her benefactress was in agony, and so she screamed for help after trying vainly to open the locked door. Giovanni and Jasmine Holland hurried to her aid, and they, too, tried in vain to force the lock. Elfinella was bewildered by Miss Tressady's continued cries of accusation, but when Giovanni heard her story of the ring, and how Helen Martin whom he knew to be Madge Baylis, had inserted some liquid into the ring, the truth was clear to him. They heard Genevra Tressady fall to the floor, and then there was no further sound from the room. Naturally they concluded that she was dead.

"Realizing the strength of the circumstantial evidence against Elfinella in having presented the ring, and against Trent in having fashioned it, they took counsel together. The fact that Giovanni had once been a criminal was known to Elfinella through his wooing of Trent's sister, Marianna, but he now disclosed to her the additional fact that Helen Martin, too, was an ex-criminal.

"Giovanni told them that Madge was a dangerous foe, and that Trent as well as Elfinella was in her power, for the evidence was all against them and nothing could be proved against Madge herself—she had left the Lodge before Elfinella called. Giovanni did not disclose Genevra Tressady's iden-

tity, although he told them that Helen Martin loved Revelstoke and had killed Miss Tressady out of revenge. He admitted that he, too, was in fear of Madge, for, if she should denounce him to the police, he must stand trial for his past crimes and doubtless also be suspected of complicity in Miss Tressady's death, in which event his criminal record would score heavily against him.

"It was his advice—and sound advice under the circumstances—that they must all in self-defense conspire to shield Madge Baylis. It seemed to them that by this course of action Elfinella could be kept out of the case altogether—but they had reckoned without a certain unconsidered witness—Jocko, the macaw, who persisted in echoing Miss Tressady's cries of accusation against Elfinella until Arnold Tressady finally silenced him.

"But Elfinella, with no thought of the macaw, and believing as her sister did, until she heard Jocko's cries, that her connection with the case need not even be suspected if they followed Giovanni's advice, left the Lodge and went at once to Lawrence Trent. She told him the whole horrible tale and he agreed with Giovanni that for their own sakes they must protect Madge Baylis.

"Miss Jasmine Holland, at Giovanni's suggestion, telephoned the pseudo-seamstress that Genevra Tressady was lying dead in her study, that murder

was suspected, and that it would be well for anyone who was known to have visited Pomander Lodge on that day to go into hiding in order to avoid being questioned.

“As you know, Madge Baylis acted immediately upon the suggestion, but, to Trent’s consternation and horror, she insisted upon taking refuge with him. He dared not refuse her shelter, so there she remained until Hildreth Revelstoke, having in some way proved to his own satisfaction that it was she who had poisoned the woman he loved, forced her to expiate this crime by drinking of the *Purpureus Somnus* that she had caused to be injected into the veins of her rival.

“I shall always believe that it was Revelstoke himself, disguised as a drug-clerk who brought the poison to the lapidary shop, but, of course, we cannot prove that now. However that was, Madge Baylis dared not disobey the command in cipher that accompanied the poison. She knew that Revelstoke had surmised the truth and intended to avenge the woman he loved, and, that for her, there was now only the hangman or the little vial that had been brought to her. She chose the easiest course.

“Looking back, we can understand how Giovanni’s anxiety to enter the locked study after his first terror had worn off and he was able to think and to plan consecutively. He wished to recover the

poison ring so that it might not serve as a clue. We know that he picked up the ring from the floor—Genevra Tressady must have succeeded in tearing it from her swollen and lacerated finger—and we know that Giovanni concealed it in the jaws of the tiger-skin rug.”

The coroner interrupted the detective at this point.

“What led you to infer, Miss Quero, that the instrument of death was a ring?”

“The abrasions on the fingers of Miss Tressady’s right hand pointed to the supposition that a ring or rings had been violently wrenched off, presumably by herself in her death agony, for the fact that none of the rings she was in the habit of wearing were missing seemed to preclude the notion of robbery. Now, since this theoretical new ring was certainly not visible, there was apparently some mystery about it. Her dying words, ‘The tiger’s eye!’ might have referred to the tiger-skin rug, they might even have referred to Giovanni Nullo, alias The Tiger, but, as I had learned of Genevra Tressady’s fondness for rings set with semi-precious stones, it occurred to me that there was a jewel called a tiger’s eye, and so I concluded that those final words of hers might with equal plausibility refer to a tiger’s eye ring.

“As soon as I had identified the dead woman as

Angela Dellarotti, I recalled that the use of a poison ring had been one of her father's favorite devices for disposing of his victims. I knew then that I had lighted upon the winning clue. It only remained for me to discover the tiger's eye ring. As Mr. Inderwick knows,"—Mercedes Quero flashed a slightly mischievous smile at the grave-faced young bank clerk—"I gained admittance to Miss Tressady's study by pretending to be Mr. Revelstoke's secretary in search of an important memorandum which he had loaned to her. Mr. Inderwick would allow me to remain only a very few minutes—he plainly distrusted and disapproved of me—but nevertheless I made a thorough investigation of the study in those precious few minutes—and I *found* what I was looking for.

"I did not believe that Miss Tressady's gesture of raising her arm and pointing to the tiger-skin rug was meaningless, so I examined that ugly beast's head with especial care and I was rewarded by the glimpse of a ring hidden snugly away in the snarling jaws. I believe either that when Genevra Tressady tore off the ring it fell near the tiger-skin rug or, that, in spite of the deathlike coma into which she had apparently sunk when the door of the study was forced, she was vaguely conscious of Giovanni's act in picking up the ring and secreting it in the jaws of the tiger, and so tried with her last words and gesture to

call attention to the instrument that caused her death and also its hiding-place. I decided to leave the ring where it was as it seemed to be safely hidden, and I could not remove it without causing more suspicion on the part of Mr. Inderwick, who might even have insisted upon handing me over to the tender mercies of Scotland Yard.”—Inspector Burton this time was included in her smile.

“The discovery of this ring,” she went on, “greatly simplified matters for me. I had now out of a little circle of suspects only to select the one most likely to have employed the former murderous device of the Dellarotti band. Of course, it must have been some one familiar with the methods of the band and probably also cognizant of Genevra Tressady’s identity, as I was convinced that this murder had its roots in her criminal past. I never thought that Elfinella and Lawrence Trent were more than victims of circumstantial evidence, but I did not quite know what to think of Arnold Tressady. He had knowledge of the dead woman’s identity, incentive for destroying her, and even the opportunity, granting the premise that he was cad enough to employ Elfinella as his emissary of death.

“In regard to Giovanni Nullo, his past record and his present suspicious behavior were against him, but for some reason I believed in his reformation and, moreover, could see no object to be gained by



him through slaying his benefactress. But Helen Martin, the apparently timid, shrinking little seamstress, suggested herself to me from the first as perhaps being of greater importance than simply a reluctant witness.

“By the time I had traced the present whereabouts of the four principal members of Angela Delarotti’s band with the exception of Madge Baylis, of whose reputed death I had always been skeptical, it did not take me long to conjecture who Helen Martin might be. My deciphering of the coded instructions that caused her enforced suicide strengthened my confidence in this surmise and also fairly proved that it was she, Madge Baylis, who had been the responsible person in the murder of Miss Tressady, and yet, although X whom I now knew to be Revelstoke, plainly believed her guilty, it might be that he was mistaken, and that after all Arnold Tressady, whose possible connection with the death of his unloved wife continued to intrigue me, might know more of the matter than he should. That is why I tested him out to-night and proved his innocence to my complete satisfaction. You wish to ask me some question, Mr. Inderwick?”

The young bank clerk nodded.

“I don’t quite understand about Giovanni’s possession of Miss Tressady’s ring—that sard ring

which we know now he did not pick up from the floor of the study as he claimed to have done.”

“Giovanni has told me the truth about that ring now, Mr. Inderwick. His explanation is very simple and I see no reason to doubt it. Of course, he lied previously to prevent any suspicion of there being another ring in question—the poison ring. The fact is, Miss Tressady entrusted that sard ring to him with instructions to carry it to Lawrence Trent in order to have the setting cleaned and strengthened. That accounts for his having it enclosed in a jeweler’s box.”

Mercedes Quero rose from her chair a little wearily.

“There is nothing more to explain, I think, and so, Mr. Tredgold, if you and these other gentlemen will excuse me, I shall go to my home now. It is very late and I need a few hours’ sleep as I have a new case to start on in the morning.”

Ralph Tredgold, shaken, but courteous, rose, too.

“I am deeply grateful for your services, Miss Quero.”

She pressed sympathetically the hand he extended to her.

“I shall always,” she said gently, “think of your sister as you think of her—as a sweet, lovable woman, innately good in spite of the cruel wrong done her by her unnatural father.”

“Thank you, Miss Quero,” Tredgold’s voice broke. “Genevra *was* a good woman. She redeemed her past—it *must* be well with her now.” He wrung the detective’s hand and turned away abruptly.

## CHAPTER XXX

### BON VOYAGE

SOME ten days later, Inderwick, now returned to his clerking duties at Palford Brothers & Palford, received a second afternoon telephone from Jasmine. This time the girl's voice was aquiver with eagerness and joy.

"Hal, can you get off for an hour or two and meet me directly at Waterloo? There will be a surprise for you there. You can come, can you not?"

Inderwick appealed to Mr. Palford, Senior, and that gentleman after due deliberation granted permission.

"Thank you, sir," said Inderwick, properly grateful, "it shan't happen again and I will work over-hours to-morrow."

Mr. Palford, Senior, waved him out magnanimously, and Inderwick, hailing a taxicab as the quickest means of locomotion, reached Waterloo in the minimum of time required by traffic congestion.

He had but short opportunity to speculate on the surprise Jasmine had in store for him. As he approached the appointed meeting-place—the track

where the boat-train to Plymouth was waiting—he caught sight of a happy-faced couple—Lawrence Trent and Elfinella—standing on the platform with Jasmine.

Elfinella, her blue eyes sparkling under the fluff of golden hair billowing out from under her smart little feathered hat, started impulsively toward him, then, with a tremulous glance at the grave face of the young bank clerk, checked herself.

“Perhaps you’ll think that we—Lorry and I—oughtn’t to have done this—at least not so soon, Mr. Inderwick—Hal.” Her sweet mouth quivered.

Lawrence Trent took her little gloved hand firmly in his.

“You mustn’t blame Nella for this, Mr. Inderwick. It was all my doing. I wanted to get her out into the country—away from—from all that has been, so that she can forget and be herself once more. She has a right to be happy, we both have, so I—I fairly carried her off by force this morning, Jasmine came along, too; in fact, she helped me plan everything, and so we’re—we’re married and off to Devon for a long honeymoon. Little Nell shall be happy again if I can make her so.”

The violinist’s voice, throaty with emotion, held a challenging note, as though he expected the world, and Inderwick, in especial, to deny their right to happiness.

But the bank clerk's serious young face broke into a sudden boyish smile.

"Congratulations, both of you! But, I say, you might have let me know so I could give my blessing and consent. You seem to forget that I'm by way of being Nella's brother some day."

Elfinella uttered a little joyful laugh.

"You *are* a dear boy, Hal, and I was silly to feel so certain that you would disapprove. Jasmine said you would understand."

"You see," laughed Jasmine, "*I* have always known that Hal was a dear boy."

Just then the guards blew warning whistles. Jasmine tenderly embraced Elfinella, and the latter clung to her, tears welling in her eyes.

"You have been such a dear, true sister. We are awfully grateful, aren't we, Lorry?"

"Rather!" Trent gripped Jasmine's hand in both his. "You're true blue, Jasmine, and it was just like you to open your heart to Marianna and persuade Weatherley to come and help her with the shop when Mr. Tressady closed up the Lodge. I know you will look in on my little sister now and then, and cheer her up a bit. It will be dreary for her with Giovanni—away. Poor *bambina*, she couldn't quite get up the courage to come and see us off."

"Ah, but you know, Lorry," broke in Elfinella,

“we have good news of Giovanni. Mercedes Quero has assured us that on account of the useful evidence he gave and his undoubted reformation, he will be recommended for as light a sentence as the law will permit. Marianna is almost as happy as—as we are, Lorry.”

The final whistles blew. The carriage doors were slamming. Trent, his dark eyes aglow, caught Elfinella and swung her lightly aboard the train.

“We’re off, little Nell!”

As the train steamed away, Jasmine slipped her hand into Inderwick’s.

“Everybody seems to be going off,” she said a little wistfully. “Mr. Tredgold sailed for Australia yesterday and Mr. Tressady left for the continent this morning. He told me that he would probably never see England again.”

“Poor chap!” said Inderwick soberly.

They stood in silence till the departing train had become less than a speck in the distance.

Then Inderwick smiled down into Jasmine’s charming, gypsy face.

“I say, suppose *we* get married soon and go off honeymooning in Devon, too.”

“Hal, you are, indeed, a dear boy.” Jasmine spoke with happy conviction.

THE END.

---





# MARK GRAY'S HERITAGE

A Romance

By *Eliot Harlow Robinson*

Author of "Smiles: A Rose of the Cumberlands,"  
"Smiling Pass," "The Maid of Mirabelle," etc.

Cloth, 12mo, with a poster jacket, \$1.90

*"What is bred in the bone will never come out of the flesh."*

MR. ROBINSON'S distinguished success came with the acclaim accredited to his novel, SMILES, "*The Best-Loved Book of the Year*," and its sequel, SMILING PASS. With delicate humor and a sincere faith in the beautiful side of human nature, Mr. Robinson has created for himself a host of enthusiastic admirers. In his new book he chooses a theme, suggested perhaps by the old proverb quoted above ("Pilpay's Fables"). His setting is a Quaker village, his theme the conflict between grave Quaker ideals and the strength and hot blood of impulsive Mark Gray.

Here is a book that is worthy of the reception accorded SMILES by all readers who appreciate a story of deep significance, simply yet powerfully built upon fundamental passions, wrought with a philosophy that always sees the best in troubled times.

The enthusiastic editor who passed on MARK GRAY'S HERITAGE calls it—hardly too emphatically—"A mighty good story with plenty of entertainment for those who like action (there is more of that in it than in any other of Mr. Robinson's novels). The reading public will unquestionably call it another 'courage book'—which they called the SMILES books, you know. The language is both strong and smooth. The story has a punch!"

# TOM AKERLEY

His Adventures in the Tall Timber and on Gaspard's  
Clearing on the Indian River

*By Theodore Roberts*

*Author of "The Fighting Starkleys,"  
"Red Feathers," etc.*

*Cloth decorative, 12mo, illustrated, \$1.75*

THE story of fearless young Tom Akerley, who, when this story opens, is an officer in the Dominion Air Force. On the occasion of giving war medals, the Colonel of the Air Force refuses to honor a dead comrade of Tom's and in a fit of anger Tom hits the Colonel. Fearing trouble for assaulting a superior officer, Tom takes to his airplane and flies away in the night. His plane is wrecked, but "the man from outside" manages to land in a Canadian backwoods settlement and takes up life there among the primitive people. He has many interesting adventures and hair-breadth escapes as he tramps the tall timber with an Indian trapper.

That Mr. Roberts knows the Canadian woods and the wild life in them, as do few living writers, has been shown by his previous successful stories. As a stylist and as a descriptive writer he occupies an enviable position in literature; but above all he is known as an inimitable story teller. His latest book has that dash and fervor, that veritable riot of action, which is so appealing to boy readers and their older brothers.

# SURPRISING ANTONIA

By *Dorothy Foster Gilman*

*Cloth decorative, 12mo, illustrated, \$1.90*

THIS ingenious lively story recounts the anxieties and successes of three resourceful charming girls — two of them daughters of a Harvard professor. They are eager to go to Europe, but lack the necessary funds. They answer an advertisement in a Boston paper, and thus sub-let the professor's house for the season, they themselves doing all the housework. An interesting family from California rents the house and from the mistakes and surprises arising from this merger of East and West, no end of fun ensues. Under one roof goes on this gay and gracious life as kitchen collides with parlor, and back-stairs and front-stairs compete with marvelous ingenuity. The glamour of the trip to Europe fades in the light of a great love and in smiles and laughter "effete Cambridge" puts up a brave fight, and the "Woolly West" shows itself appreciative of the real things in a Cambridge education.

# IN GREENBROOK

By Merritt P. Allen

*Cloth decorative, 12mo, illustrated, \$2.00*

A NOVEL of great interest and charm, a cross-section of rural New England, which portrays with intimate detail the daily life and doings in a typical Vermont village. Though small, Greenbrook had been for two decades blessed by the ministrings of the kindly old country practitioner, Doctor Derby. When you read of the time when it becomes necessary for him to take down his shingle and pass into the only rest which comes to the conscientious country doctor, you will rejoice with the people of the village that his place is to be taken temporarily by as worthy a successor as young Doctor Mayforth. You will be equally delighted to hear of Richard Mayforth's final decision to forsake his appointment to the staff of a large city hospital to remain permanently among the Greenbrook folk, who so direly need him—a fact which aids materially in bringing about a reconciliation with beautiful Helen Hentley. Their life and work together in Greenbrook make a charming idyl.

To quote one enthusiastic editor: "IN GREENBROOK stirs up the same interest in small town life that MAIN STREET does. In fact, this novel does for New England what MAIN STREET did for the Middle West."

# THE SCARLET MACAW

By G. E. Locke

Author of "The Red Cavalier"

*Cloth decorative, 12mo, illustrated, poster jacket, \$1.00*

GENEVRA TRESSADY, a young and beautiful English girl, is found in her room stone dead — a deadly poison had been administered. A great scarlet macaw (apparently the only witness to the murder) gives the alarm, with his mimickings of the girl's death screams. This is the opening situation of a baffling mystery detective story. There is a maze of clues, tangled and confusing, which send the police scurrying in one direction, Scotland Yard in another, and Mr. Burton and Mercedes Quero (the detective of RED CAVALIER fame) in still another direction.

Who is the criminal and what the motive for the crime? The answer is one that even habitual readers of detective stories will find it hard to solve, for THE SCARLET MACAW is one of the most mystifying, thrilling and dramatic detective novels that has been published in many a day. An even more absorbing story than THE RED CAVALIER, which the critics pronounced "the best mystery story of the year."

# PETER'S BEST SELLER

By Margaret R. Piper

Author of "Wild Wings," "Sylvia;  
The Cheerful Book," etc.

*Cloth decorative, 12mo, illustrated, \$2.00*

A FASCINATINGLY different and altogether delightful novel of the present day—for grown-ups, young and old. It is the story of the great Peter Loomis, famous producer of "best sellers," who is "written out" to the extent that he declares further writing is impossible for him. Various remedies or prescriptions are suggested to him by which he may recover his fluency of expression—by falling in love (which Peter has seriously tried to do, but at thirty-eight he is still a bachelor!), by working as a laborer, or by a yachting trip. He tries each prescription during the course of the story and it is by an interesting combination of all three, particularly because of Daphne Joyce, young and beautiful possessor of a promising voice and an interesting history, that he is eventually restored to his former facility and writes the "best seller" of the year.

PETER'S BEST SELLER has all the sparkle and vivacity of youth, touched to higher notes, now and then, by delicate hints of romance and pathos.

# POLLY THE PAGAN

Her Lost Love Letters

*By Isabel Anderson*

*With an appreciative Foreword by Basil King*

*Cloth decorative, 12mo, illustrated, \$1.90*

ISABEL ANDERSON, who heretofore has confined her literary talents to writing of presidents and diplomats and fascinating foreign lands, contributes to our list her first novel, POLLY THE PAGAN, a story of European life and "high society." The story is unfolded in the lively letters of a gay and vivacious American girl traveling in Europe, and tells of the men whom she meets in Paris, in London or Rome, her flirtations (and they are many and varied!) and exciting experiences. Among the letters written to her are slangy ones from an American college boy and some in broken English from a fascinated Russian Prince (or was he disillusioned, when after dining at a smart Parisian café with the adorable Polly he was trapped by secret police?); but the chief interest, so far as Polly's *affaires d'amour* are concerned, centers around the letters from a young American, in the diplomatic service in Rome, who is in a position to give intimate descriptions of smart life and Italian society.

The character drawing is clever, and the suspense as to whom the fascinating Polly will marry, if indeed the mysterious young lady will marry anybody, is admirably sustained.

# THE RED CAVALIER

Or, The Twin Turrets Mystery

By G. E. Locke

*Cloth decorative, 12mo, illustrated, \$1.90*

HERE is a mystery story that is different! The subtlety and strangeness of India — poison and daggers, the impassive faces and fierce hearts of Prince Bardai and his priestly adviser; a typical English week-end house party in the mystery-haunted castle, Twin Turrets, in Yorkshire; a vivid and contrasting background.

And the plot! Who is the mysterious Red Cavalier? Is he the ghost of the ancestral portrait, that hangs in Sir Robert Grainger's strange library? Is he flesh and blood, and responsible for the marauding thefts in the neighborhood? Is he responsible for Prince Kassim's murder? Or is it only coincidence that one of the guests at the masked ball happened to wear the costume of the Red Cavalier?

Miss Locke has been able to weave a weird and absorbing tale of modern detective romance, the strangeness of India in modern England.

There is Lady Berenice Coningsby, a bit *déclassé*; Ethelyn Roydon, more so; Princess Lona Bardai, "Little Lotus-Blossom," sweet and pathetic; Mrs. Dalrymple, the woman of mystery; Miss Vandelia Egerton, the spinster owner of Twin Turrets. There is dashing Max Egerton and the impeccable Lord Borrowdean; Captain Grenville Coningsby; Prince Kassim Bardai, with the impenetrable eyes, and Chand Talsdad, his venerable adviser. Which of them is the Red Cavalier?



# Selections from The Page Company's List of Fiction

---

---

WORKS OF

**ELEANOR H. PORTER**

**POLLYANNA: The GLAD Book (510,000)**

Trade Mark Trade Mark

Cloth decorative, 12mo, illustrated, \$1.90

Mr. Leigh Mitchell Hodges, *The Optimist*, in an editorial for the *Philadelphia North American*, says: "And when, after Pollyanna has gone away, you get her letter saying she is going to take 'eight steps' tomorrow — well, I don't know just what you may do, but I know of one person who buried his face in his hands and shook with the gladdest sort of sadness and got down on his knees and thanked the Giver of all gladness for Pollyanna."

**POLLYANNA: The GLAD Book. MARY PICKFORD EDITION**

Trade Mark Trade Mark

Illustrated with thirty-two half-tone reproductions of scenes from the motion picture production, and a jacket with a portrait of Mary Pickford in color.

Cloth decorative, 12mo, \$2.25

While preparing "Pollyanna" for the screen, Miss Pickford said enthusiastically that it was the best picture she had ever made in her life, and the success of the picture on the screen has amply justified her statement. Mary Pickford's interpretation of the beloved little heroine as shown in the illustrations, adds immeasurably to the intrinsic charm of this popular story.

**POLLYANNA GROWS UP: The Second GLAD Book**

Trade Mark (253,000) Trade Mark

Cloth decorative, 12mo, illustrated, \$1.90

When the story of POLLYANNA told in *The Glad Book* was ended, a great cry of regret for the vanishing "Glad Girl" went up all over the country — and other countries, too. Now POLLYANNA appears again, just as sweet and joyous-hearted, more grown up and more lovable.

"Take away frowns! Put down the worries! Stop fidgeting and disagreeing and grumbling! Cheer up, everybody! POLLYANNA has come back!" — *Christian Herald*.

## WORKS OF ELEANOR H. PORTER (Continued)

**MISS BILLY (93rd thousand)**

Cloth decorative, with a frontispiece in full color from a painting by G. Tyng, \$1.90

"There is something altogether fascinating about 'Miss Billy,' some inexplicable feminine characteristic that seems to demand the individual attention of the reader from the moment we open the book until we reluctantly turn the last page." — *Boston Transcript*.

**MISS BILLY'S DECISION (78th thousand)**

Cloth decorative, with a frontispiece in full color from a painting by Henry W. Moore, \$1.90

"The story is written in bright, clever style and has plenty of action and humor. Miss Billy is nice to know and so are her friends." — *New Haven Leader*.

**MISS BILLY — MARRIED (86th thousand)**

Cloth decorative, with a frontispiece in full color from a painting by W. Haskell Coffin, \$1.90

"Although Pollyanna is the only copyrighted glad girl, Miss Billy is just as glad as the younger figure and radiates just as much gladness. She disseminates joy so naturally that we wonder why all girls are not like her." — *Boston Transcript*.

**SIX STAR RANCH (95th thousand)**

Cloth decorative, 12mo, illustrated by R. Farrington Elwell, \$1.90

"'Six Star Ranch' bears all the charm of the author's genius and is about a little girl down in Texas who practices the 'Pollyanna Philosophy' with irresistible success. The book is one of the kindest things, if not the best, that the author of the Pollyanna books has done. It is a welcome addition to the fast-growing family of *Glad Books*." — *Howard Russell Bangs in the Boston Post*.

**CROSS CURRENTS**

Cloth decorative, illustrated, \$1.50

"To one who enjoys a story of life as it is to-day, with its sorrows as well as its triumphs, this volume is sure to appeal." — *Book News Monthly*.

**THE TURN OF THE TIDE**

Cloth decorative, illustrated, \$1.50

"A very beautiful book showing the influence that went to the development of the life of a dear little girl into a true and good woman." — *Herald and Presbyterian, Cincinnati, Ohio*.

NOVELS BY

**ELIOT HARLOW ROBINSON**

Each one volume, cloth decorative, 12mo, illustrated, \$1.90

A book which has established its author in the front rank of American novelists.

**SMILES, A ROSE OF THE CUMBERLANDS (29th thousand)**

E. J. Anderson, former managing Editor of the Boston *Advertiser* and *Record*, is enthusiastic over the story and says:

"I have read 'Smiles' in one reading. After starting it I could not put it down. Never in my life have I read a book like this that thrilled me half as much, and never have I seen a more masterful piece of writing."

**SMILING PASS: A Sequel to "SMILES," A Rose of the Cumberland**

The thousands who have read and loved Mr. Robinson's earlier story of the little Cumberland mountain girl, whose bright courage won for her the affectionate appellation of "Smiles," will eagerly welcome her return.

"Applied sociology, mixed with romance and adventure that rise to real dramatic intensity. But the mixture is surprisingly successful. The picture impresses one as being faithfully drawn from the living models with sympathetic understanding. The book is effective."—*New York Evening Post*.

**THE MAID OF MIRABELLE: A Romance of Lorraine**

Illustrated with reproductions of sketches made by the author, and with a portrait of "The Maid of Mirabelle," from a painting by Neale Ordayne, on the cover.

"The spirit of all the book is the bubbling, the irrepressibly indomitable, cheerful faith of the people, at their very best, against the grave Quakerism from the United States standing out grimly but faithfully. The tale is simply, but strongly told."—*Montreal Family Herald and Weekly Star*.

**MAN PROPOSES; Or, The Romance of John Alden Shaw**

"This is first of all a charming romance, distinguished by a fine sentiment of loyalty to an ideal, by physical courage, indomitable resolution to carry to success an altruistic undertaking, a splendid woman's devotion, and by a vein of spontaneous, sparkling humor that offsets its more serious phases."—*Springfield Republican*.

THE ROMANCES OF  
**L. M. MONTGOMERY**

Each one volume, cloth decorative, 12mo, \$1.90

**ANNE OF GREEN GABLES (364th thousand)**

Illustrated by M. A. and W. A. J. Claus.

"In 'Anne of Green Gables' you will find the dearest and most moving and delightful child since the immortal Alice." — *Mark Twain in a letter to Francis Wilson.*

"I take it as a great test of the worth of the book that while the young people are rummaging all over the house looking for Anne, the head of the family has carried her off to read on his way to town." — *Bliss Carman.*

**ANNE OF AVONLEA (259th thousand)**

Illustrated by George Gibbs.

"Here we have a book as human as 'David Harum,' a heroine who outcharms a dozen princesses of fiction, and reminds you of some sweet girl you know, or knew back in the days when the world was young." — *San Francisco Bulletin.*

**CHRONICLES OF AVONLEA (45th thousand)**

Illustrated by George Gibbs.

"The author shows a wonderful knowledge of humanity, great insight and warmheartedness in the manner in which some of the scenes are treated, and the sympathetic way the gentle peculiarities of the characters are brought out." — *Baltimore Sun.*

**ANNE OF THE ISLAND (68th thousand)**

Illustrated by H. Weston Taylor.

"It has been well worth while to watch the growing up of Anne, and the privilege of being on intimate terms with her throughout the process has been properly valued. The once little girl of Green Gables should have a permanent fictional place of high yet tender esteem." — *New York Herald.*

**FURTHER CHRONICLES OF AVONLEA (20th thousand).** Illustrated by John Goss.

Nathan Haskell Dole compares Avonlea to Longfellow's Grand Pre — and says, "There is something in these continued chronicles of Avonlea like the delicate art which has made Cranford a classic."

"The reader has dipped into but one or two stories when he realizes that the author is the most natural story teller of the day." — *Salt Lake City Citizen.*



BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 9999 05428 7741

**Boston Public Library**  
**Central Library, Copley Square**

**Division of  
Reference and Research Services**

The Date Due Card in the pocket indicates the date on or before which this book should be returned to the Library

Please do not remove cards from this pocket.

FEB 4 1883

